



The 2017/18 PFA

A-League Report



Supporting the Players Building the Game



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A-League Foreword



The A-League has reached its next great crossroads.

Before exploring the big questions facing the future of the men's domestic competition, I will start, as always, with the achievements of the players, and the compelling season they delivered in 2017/18.

Sydney FC continued to set the benchmark with another record-setting season, featuring a Premiership and FFA Cup double. Our annual survey of A-League players showed that Sydney's on-field success was underpinned by the league's most highly rated club culture. It demonstrates the inherent value in positive workplaces and the benefit of creating professional, respectful and honest environments to consistently maximise high performance.

Melbourne Victory became the first A-League team to win the Championship from outside the top two in the regular season, showing incredible character and the winner's mentality that we have come to expect from their current and emerging leaders.

Newcastle's resurgence captured the imagination of a proud football region and highlighted the organic potential of our clubs and competitions at their best. Riley McGree's wondrous Puskas Award contender in the Finals Series captured, in one moment, the audacity and freshness of their entire season.

The season catapulted the likes of Andrew Nabbout, Josh Risdon, Daniel Arzani and Dimitri Petratos to the World Cup, and the A-League played a foundational role in the careers of the majority of the Socceroos squad – a squad that continues to achieve the incredible given the odds it faces.

These stories go on.

Despite these achievements, this report reveals a number of pressing challenges facing the A-League. Attendance and TV figures are down. Player churn is at historic highs. Competitive balance and financial robustness are myths, yet players – and clubs through the inability to build value in their squads – continue to endure significant adverse side effects of a broken Salary Cap that was supposed to promote those outcomes.

Our low levels of available match minutes, relative to the rest of the world, threaten our international competitiveness at all levels. On this front two new clubs from 2019/20 are welcomed, but the game is in danger of remaining too distracted with personality politics to ensure mistakes will not be made.

I remain, however, so optimistic about the future of the A-League.

Yes, we are at the crossroads. However, the report highlights we still have an all-action,

entertaining and high-scoring competition, while sensible and collaborative decision-making will ensure positive outcomes for players, fans, clubs and the broader game. This includes working with the PFA to ensure the best possible Collective Bargaining Agreement for the 2019/20 season, working with clubs to ensure the best possible model for an independent league and working with the entire football community to ensure the A-League is embedded at every contact point within the game. It will cultivate a unity of purpose across the sport's army of followers.

The PFA will continue to work tirelessly to ensure the A-League fulfils its full, vast potential sooner rather than later.

John Didulica | PFA Chief Executive

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A-League Survey



Introducing the survey widget

Where this symbol appears, you will see data and quotes from our major annual survey of A-League players. Every A-League player was sent a link to the online survey in the weeks leading up to and following the 2017-18 A-League Grand Final. Sixty-nine players responded to the survey, although not every player completed every question.

The survey covered a broad range of areas impacting a player's career, from their contract, to work and study outside of football, to transition-readiness, to assessments of their club, the A-League, the next Collective Bargaining Agreement, social media and the PFA.

Employment Framework

Snapshot

63.4%

Players who were coming off contract this season

40%

Players in their first year at their current club

2.4

Average number of seasons at current club

54.5%

Players slightly or not at all confident about career direction

6.1%

Minutes played by U21 players

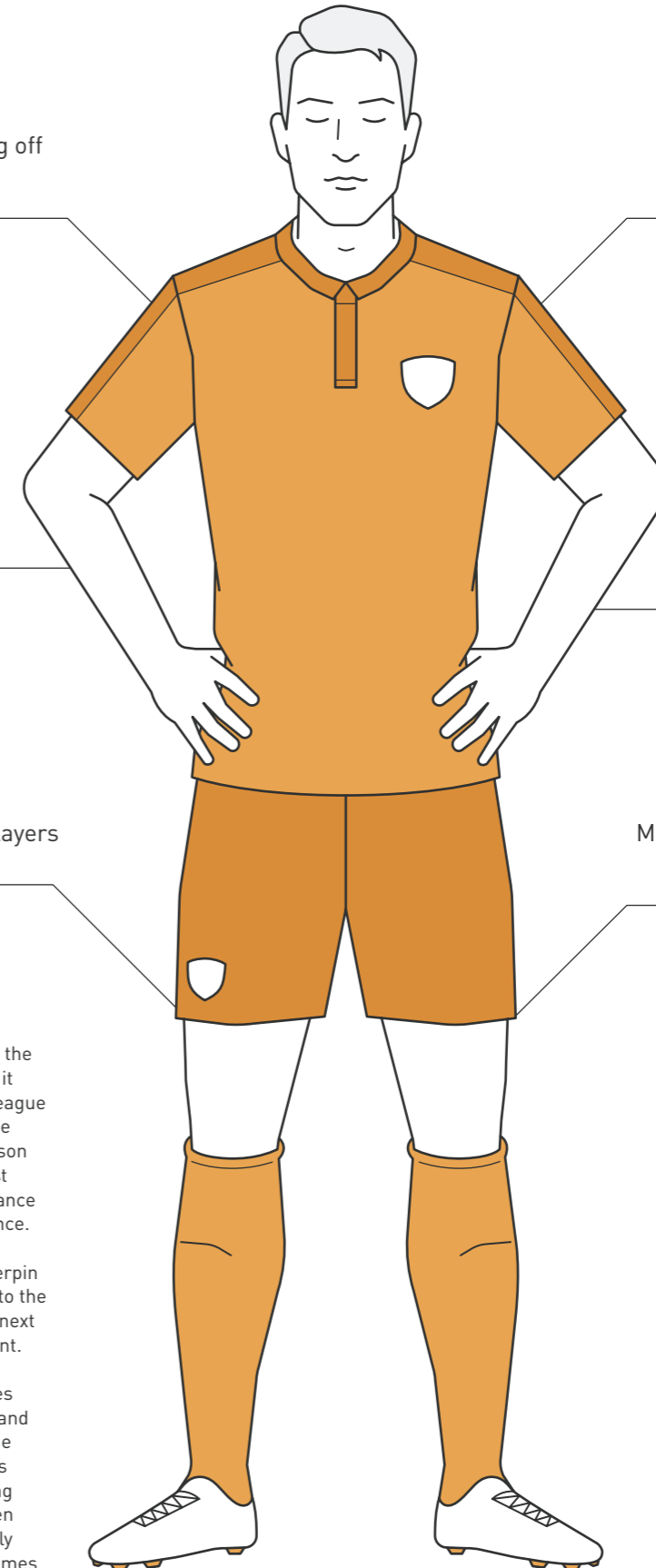
15,390

More minutes played in the J1 League than the A-League

In this section we highlight the record levels of player churn in the A-League this season and how it harms players, clubs and the league as a whole. We also find that the most successful clubs this season were those that used the fewest players, reinforcing the importance of squad stability for performance.

The results of this section underpin the case for significant reform to the employment framework in the next Collective Bargaining Agreement.

We also break down the minutes played by different age groups and foreign players and compare the amount of playing opportunities with global leagues, highlighting the need to expand and lengthen the A-League to achieve globally competitive development outcomes.



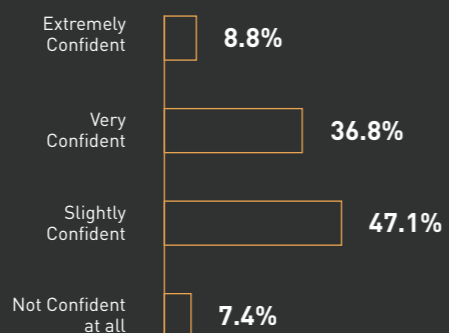
Minimum Wage Benchmarking

A-League	2017/18	\$61,287	
A-League U20	2017/18	\$45,686	
Cricket State player	2017/18	\$66,243	
AFL	2018	\$105,000	+ \$5,000 Match Fee
AFL First year / first round draft pick	2018	\$88,200	+ \$4,300 Match Fee
NRL	2018	\$100,000	
NRL Development list	2018	\$60,000	+ \$3,000 Match Fee
Super Rugby Core playing squad	2019	\$85,000	



A-League Survey

In general, how confident are you about the direction of/your control over your football career?

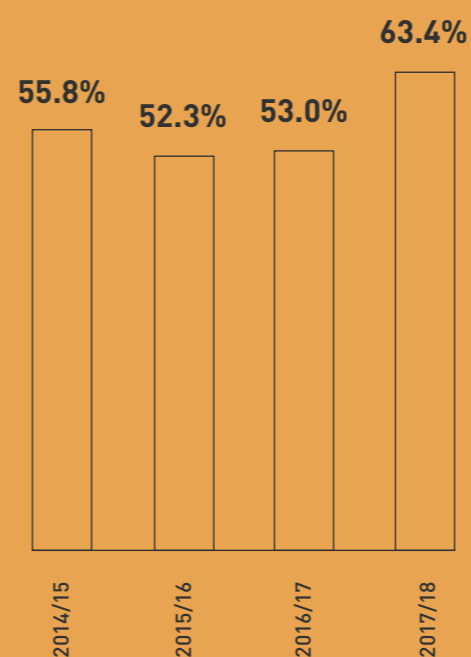


The majority of A-League survey respondents indicated a slight-to-non-existent level of confidence about where their football careers are heading.

The players also indicated they are largely supportive of labour market reforms that would drive more stable careers in the A-League.

Player Churn

Percentage of players off contract



The 2017/18 season saw a record level of contract insecurity for A-League players. At the start of the season, over 63% of players were coming out of contract, and nearly 40% of players becoming unemployed on June 1.

40% of players were only in the first year at their current club and the average time players had spent at their current club was just 2.4 seasons.

In addition, more than half of players (54%) have been in the A-League for less than 3 seasons and more than half (53%) of players under 20 had a year or less remaining on their contracts at season's end.

This spiralling level of churn is harmful not only to players but to clubs and the league overall.

Clubs are striving to maintain a compelling connection with their fans, but fans are just as likely to see their favourite players scoring against them as for them next season.

A PFA-commissioned survey of A-League fans revealed that 77% of fans would like to see more stable squads in the A-League and over a third of fans have considered

attending fewer games or not renewing their memberships because their favourite players have left their club.

Research from CIES Football Observatory (Monthly Report #34) has shown that across 31 European leagues, there is a strong correlation between squad stability and team success. Sydney FC have been an exemplar of this trend locally. In addition, clubs can only collect transfers fees if the players who attract interest are under contract.

But despite these incentives for clubs to sign players longer term, the evidence shows the trends moving the other way. So the reality of clubs' behaviour suggests the forces pushing towards higher churn are stronger than those listed above.

These problems are symptoms of the A-League's labour market model. The only way the current model could be logically defended is if it was achieving positive outcomes that justified the negative side effects. That is, if the good outweighed the bad. But the salary cap is not achieving the legitimate outcomes it is explicitly designed to achieve.

According to the A-League website, the cap exists to promote sustainable clubs and competitive balance.

The A-League's chequered history of unsustainable clubs and ongoing pressure on the viability of smaller market clubs makes it difficult to claim this outcome has been achieved.

And as we will see in more detail on page 16, the competitive balance of the A-League has been increasingly compromised in recent seasons to accommodate investment in more marketable and higher quality players by the clubs that can afford to do so.

This investment in quality is more important to the league's health in a competitive sports and entertainment market than close games, which is why the top flight of England and not Russia (Europe's most balanced league) is the most commercially successful league in Europe.

So, players, fans and clubs suffer the unwanted side effects of a mechanism not achieving its primary aims. This is why the PFA has described the current labour market model as 'not fit for purpose' and will advocate for reforms which will promote more stable careers for players and a more successful league.

One third of players coming off contract this season were 22 or younger



Player Analysis

Starting XI Stability

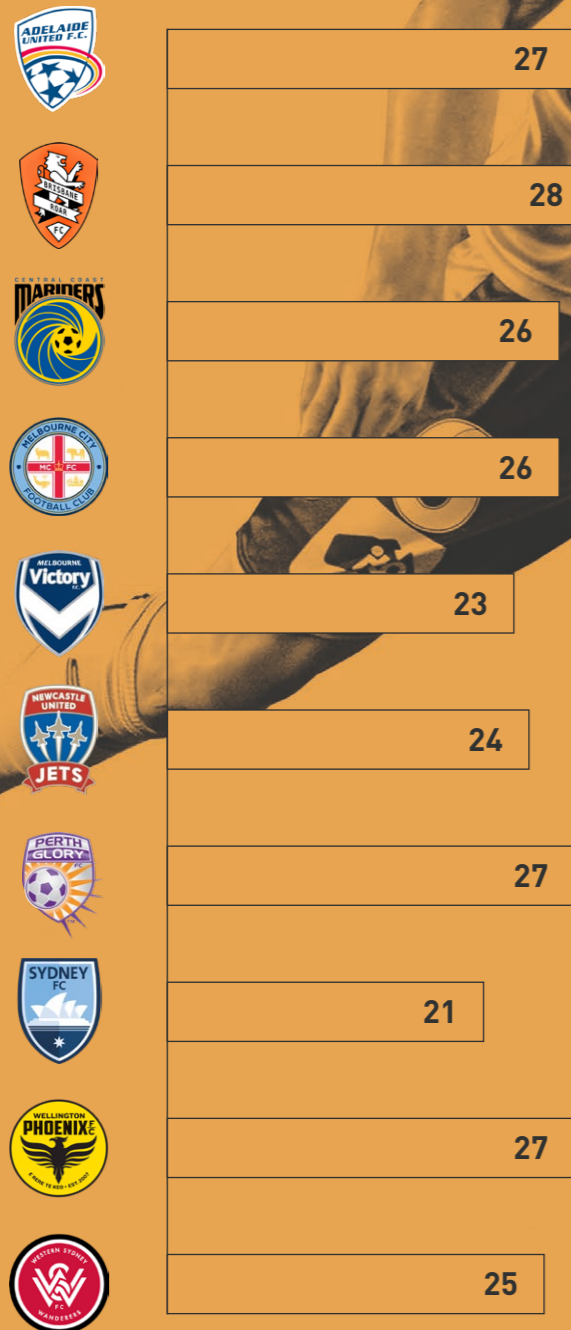
Total players used in the A-League 2017/18



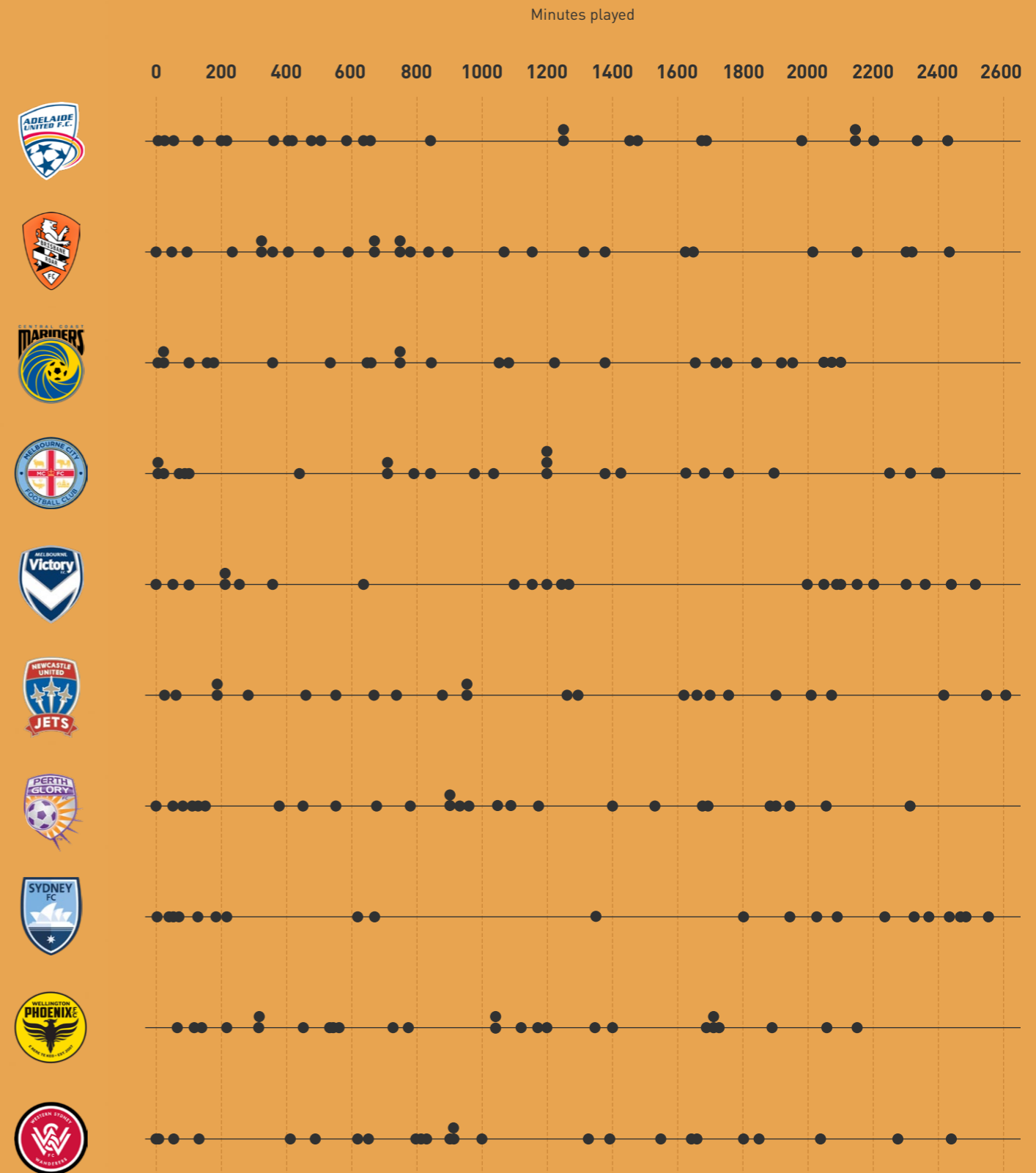
246

Eight players played at two different clubs

Club by Club Breakdown



Spread of minutes within each team



Match Minutes

Match minutes by age

Age	Number who made an appearance	Total minutes played	Average minutes per player	Percentage of total minutes
U21	43	17,016	396	6.1%
21-25	67	71,049	1,060	25.7%
26-30	60	76,295	1,272	27.6%
31+	76	112,449	1,480	40.6%
Total	246	276,809	1,125	100%

There was a correlation between clubs using fewer players throughout the season and on-field success. Premiers Sydney FC used the fewest players, 21, while Champions Melbourne Victory used the second fewest, 23.

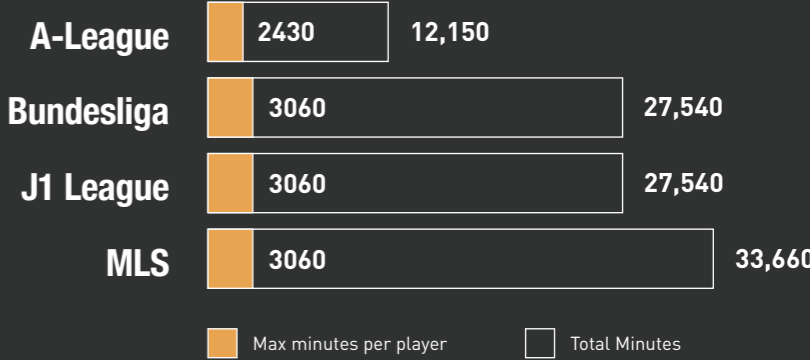
There is no right or wrong share of minutes that players from different age groups should play. For each opportunity a young player gets, an older player must make way, so there is always a compromise between the priorities of youth development and career longevity.

We do know that ages in the A-League are creeping upwards. Some excellent young talents broke through this season, headlined by Daniel Arzani, but by average age, this season eclipsed the previous two as the 'oldest' on record.

The A-League's talent development imperative is evidently in conflict with the coaches' prerogative to rely on more experienced players to get the results that preserve their jobs.

It is expected that the addition of two new clubs for the 2019/20 season will create more opportunities for young players and lower the average age, but we must continue to monitor this trend in respect of the competing interests of clubs, coaches and the broader game. The A-League's purpose and key performance indicators may need to be better defined so that its success can be measured and, if appropriate, interventions employed.

Match minutes comparison Regular seasons only



It's clear the A-League is falling short of providing a globally competitive volume of match minutes for our players.

Our collective playing group is seeing less than half the pitch time of those in the top divisions of Japan, the United States and Germany. An individual A-League player has about 20% fewer match minutes available to him than those in the other leagues.

Given that 14 of the 15 Australians who played at the 2018 World Cup have

played in the A-League at some point, the league's role as a development platform for the national team is as prevalent as ever. This role must be given appropriate weight when considering the length and size of the professional competition, alongside other factors.

Obviously the addition of two new teams for the 2019/20 season will be a welcome development in terms of creating more opportunities for players.

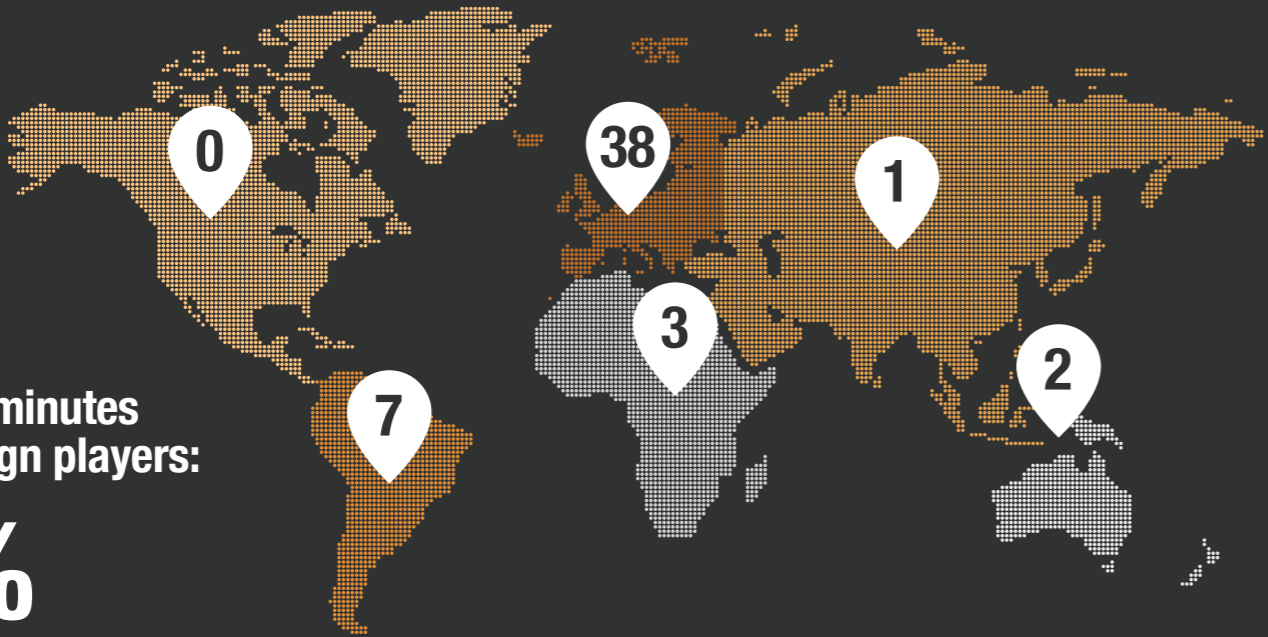
Foreign Players

Total foreign players:

51

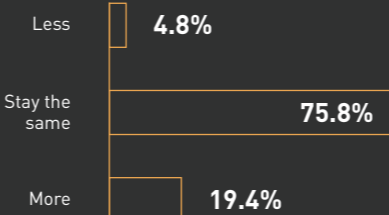
Percentage of minutes played by foreign players:

27.8%



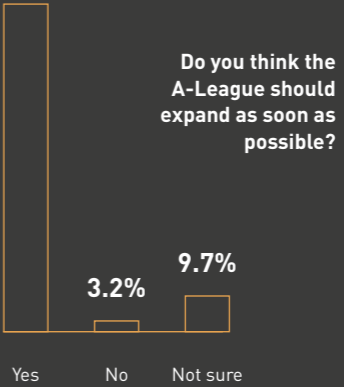
A-League Survey

Do you think the number of foreign players in the A-League should change?



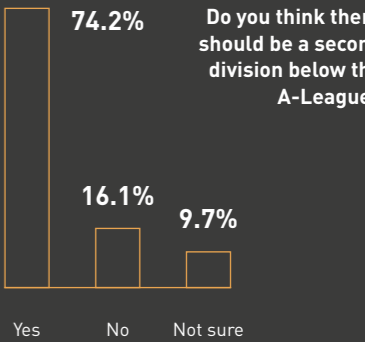
A-League Survey

87.1%



A large majority of players would like to see the professional footprint expanded, through either more A-League clubs, a second division, or both.

Specific comments from players all touched on the theme of sustainability, showing that players are engaged with the complexity around growing professional opportunities in a way that doesn't compromise the stability of their careers and quality of their working environments.



Player comment: "As players we all want expansion as it creates more jobs and gives more players opportunities. But we need to learn from the past and not just dive into expansion until the right amount of planning/research etc. has been done."

League Assessment

Snapshot

44

points between first and last for the past two seasons

17

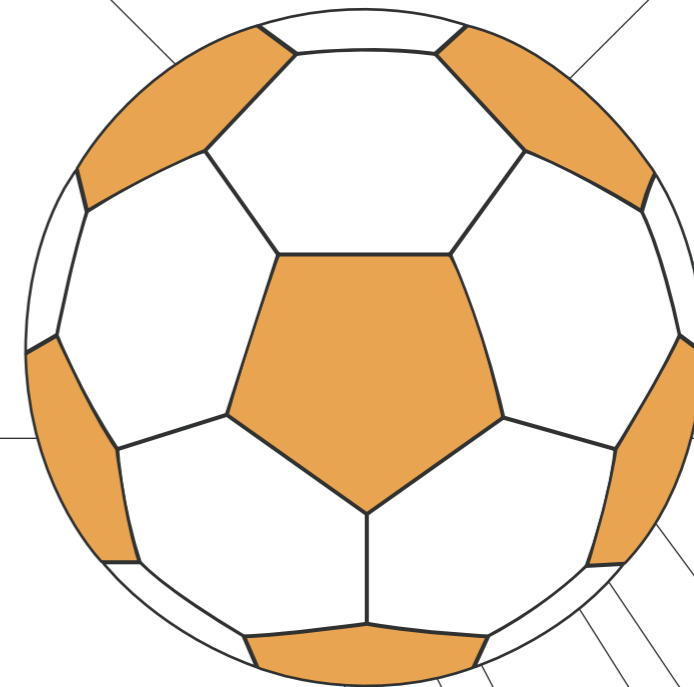
times the five big market clubs have made the finals out of a possible 20

18.6%

matches won by 3 or more goals

13.4%

decrease in crowds from last season



In this section we analyse the 2017/18 A-League season across several metrics.

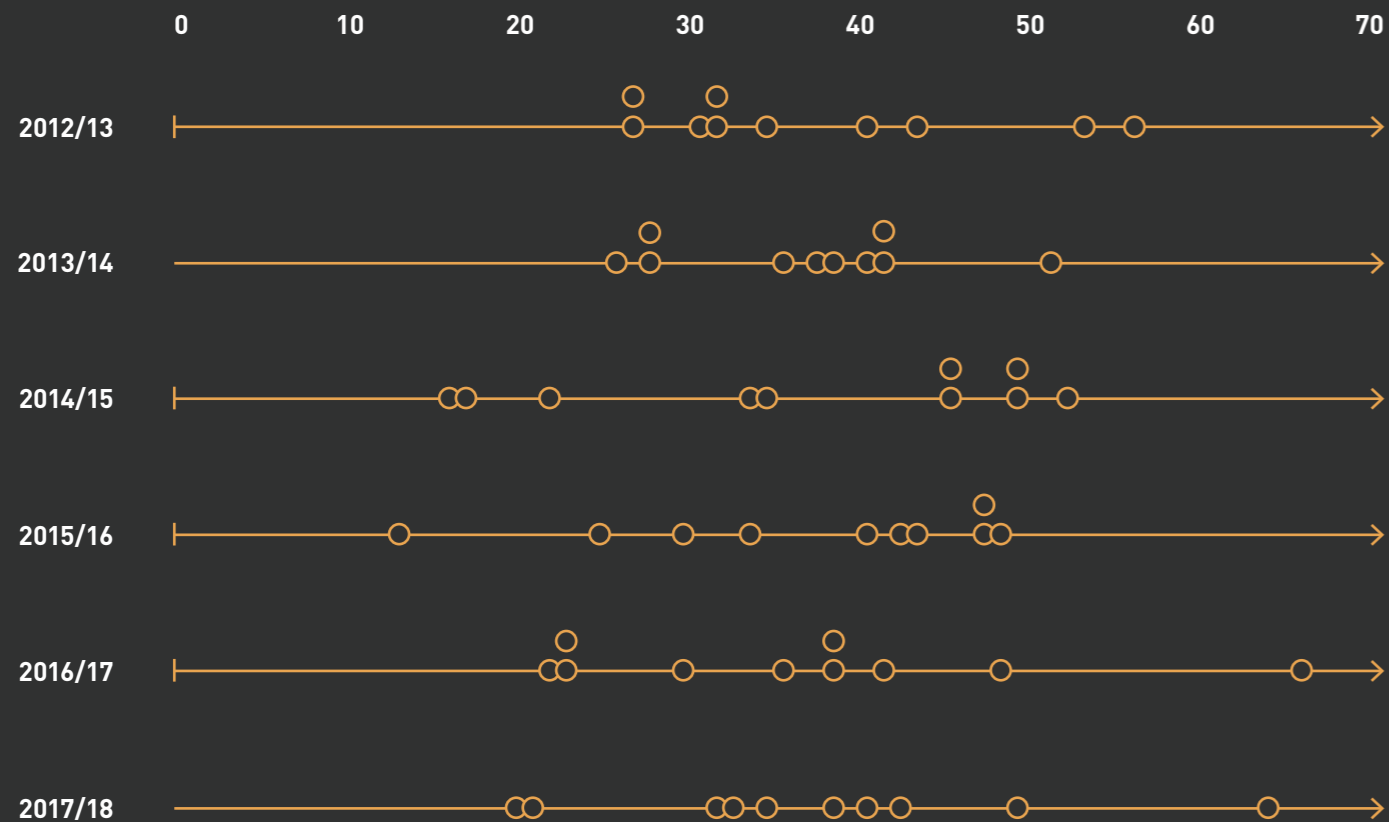
Perhaps the most important measures of all – crowds and TV viewers – have dropped this season. Feedback from A-League players suggests dissatisfaction with the matchday experience for supporters and a strong appetite for the A-League to become an independent entity.

We also analyse the competitive balance of the league and find that the same teams are winning more consistently and by larger margins in recent seasons. This points to a failure in the stated aim of the salary cap model, without preventing the unwanted side effect of high player turnover discussed in the Employment Framework section.

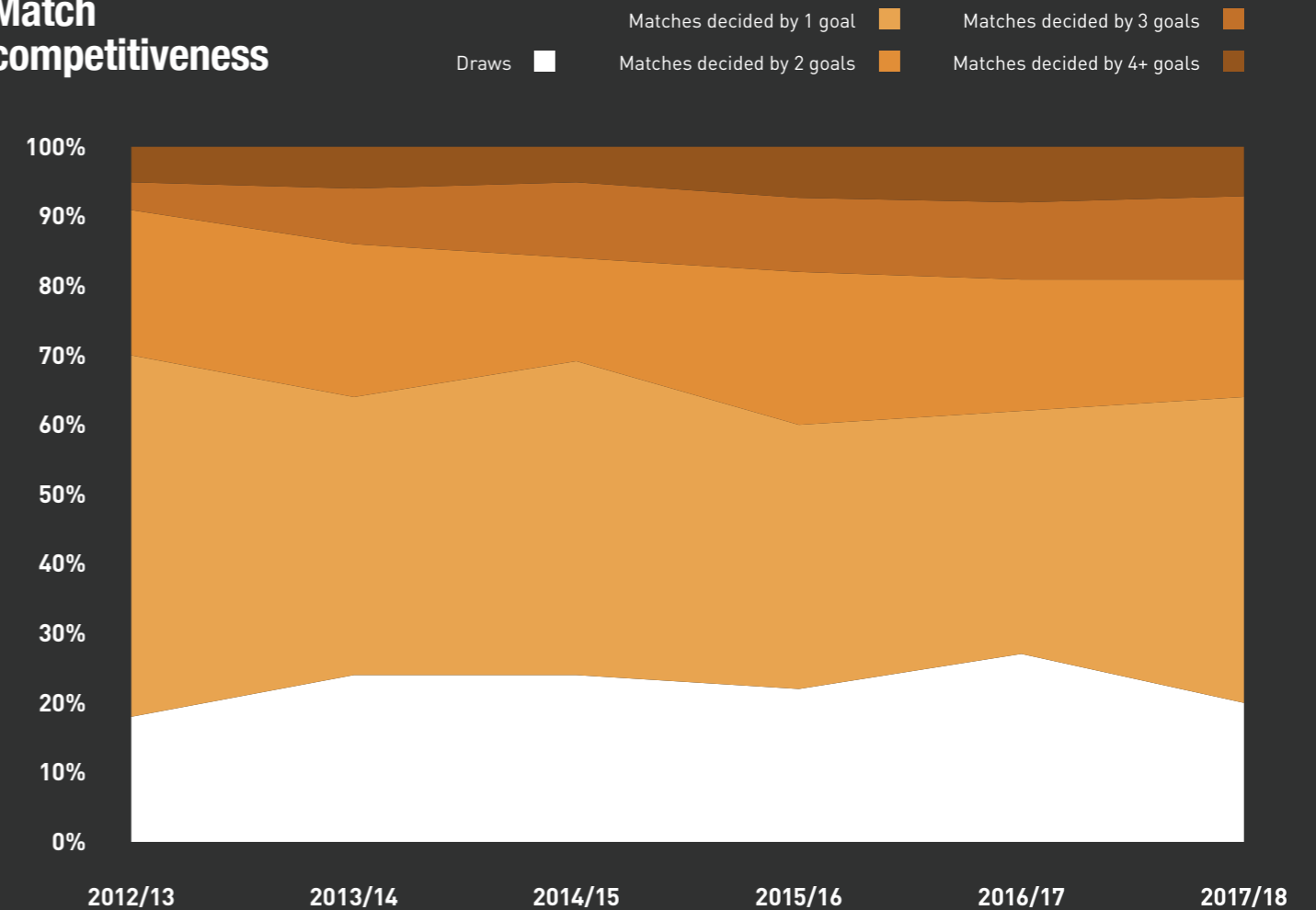
This section paints a picture of a league reaching a crossroads where major reform is required to kickstart a virtuous cycle of growth.

Competitive Balance

Points spread comparison



Match competitiveness



Finals appearances 2014-2018



Any way you cut it, the A-League has become less competitively balanced during the period with the current ten clubs. Across seasons, within seasons and within matches, the same teams are winning more consistently and by bigger margins.

Looking at the charts, we first see that the points spread between the top and bottom of the ladder has grown. Sydney FC earned 44 more points than the bottom-placed club in each of the past two seasons.

Within individual matches, the share of matches decided by three or more goals, shown by the top two colours on the match competitiveness chart, has generally grown over these seasons.

And fewer clubs are sharing in the success. The variety of teams finishing in the top positions has narrowed. The five teams from the biggest markets have reached the finals 17 out of a possible 20 times in the past four seasons, while the other five clubs only made 7 out of a possible 20 finals berths.

Newcastle Jets' Cinderella story this season was all the more compelling because it bucked this trend, but even so, their rise up the ladder was fuelled in part by significantly increased investment in their playing squad from the previous season.

To explain this trend, we note that all over the football world, results correlate very strongly with wage spend. As the difference in spending between A-League clubs has grown, so too has the difference in on-field performance. The roles of coaching and luck in determining ladder position have diminished. The divergence in spending has been allowed, or even promoted, because the salary cap regulations have been softened to allow investment in better and more marketable players by clubs that can afford to do so.

That is because the league's administrators have apparently recognised that competitive balance is not an end in itself which must be maximised, but one of many factors which might determine a league's appeal and success.

Fans do not watch games only because they are close, but also because they are high quality (and for many other reasons).

But because the size of the annual club grant has not kept pace with the ambitions of the well-capitalised clubs, the smaller clubs have been left well off the pace. Growing the club grant depends on the league's administrators maximising the commercial potential of the league and investing a fair share of that revenue back into clubs. Arguably, neither of these has happened.

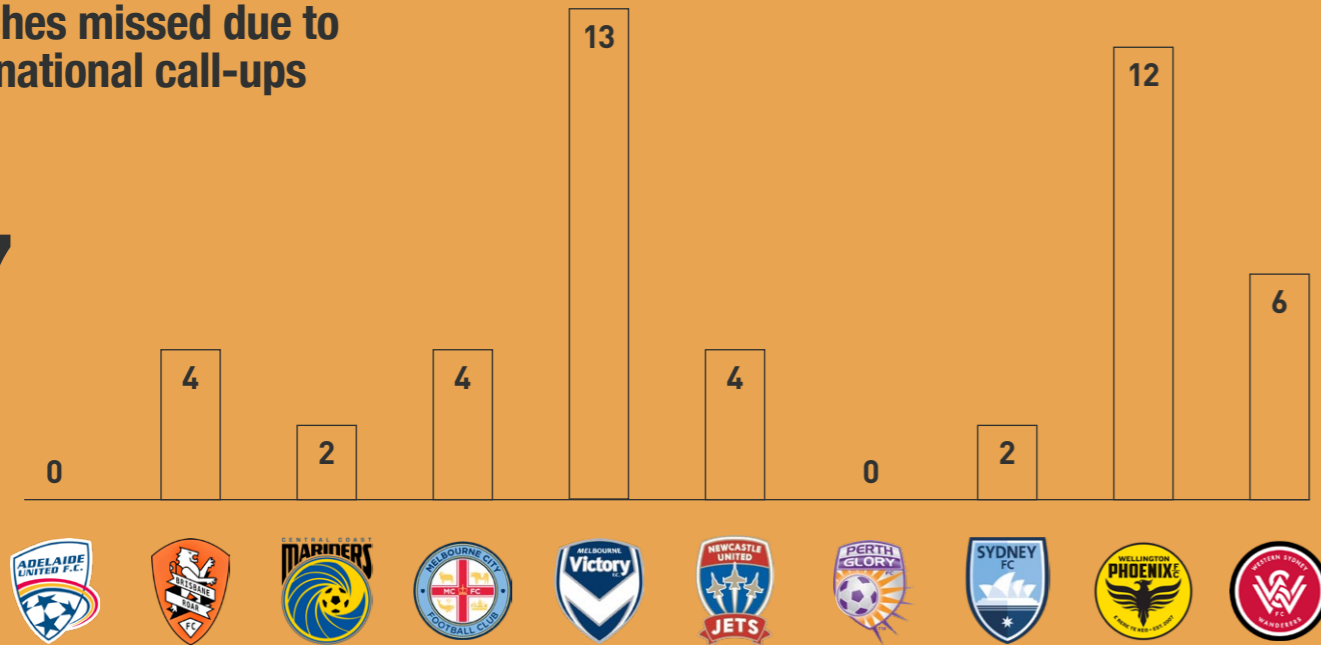
What we have now is a league that is no more or less competitively balanced than the average European league, but one in which players and clubs suffer the unwanted side effects of a labour market model which has a primary purpose of promoting competitive balance. It is the worst of both worlds.

Scheduling

Period from A-League Round 1 to Grand Final.
Includes A-League, FFA Cup and AFC Champions League fixtures

Matches missed due to international call-ups

Total:
47



Average days between matches

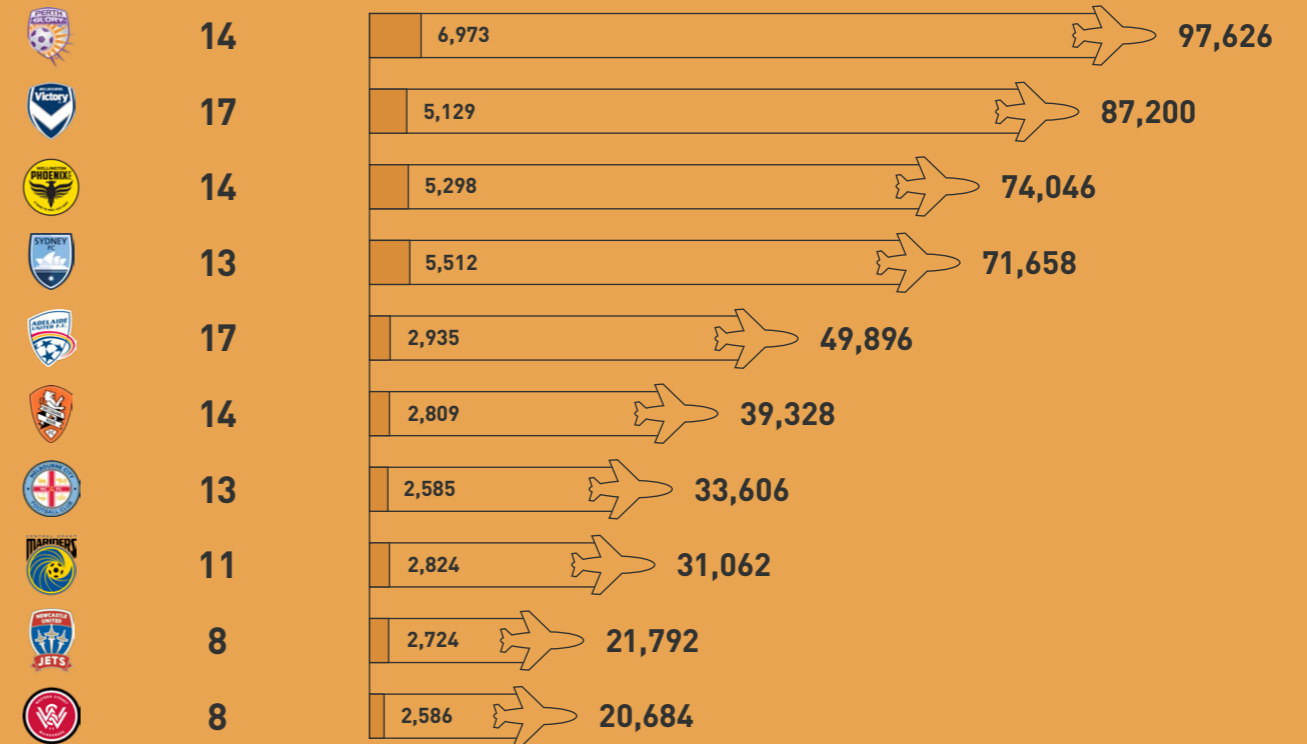
	Number of matches	Average days break	3 days	4 days	5 days
	30	6.76	0	4	6
	29	7.00	1	3	2
	27	7.27	1	0	3
	29	7.25	1	1	4
	36	6.00	1	7	6
	29	7.50	1	0	4
	27	7.23	0	3	4
	36	5.80	1	9	5
	27	7.23	1	1	1
	28	7.00	2	1	3
Total		6.85	9	29	38

Distance travelled

Trips (requiring air travel)

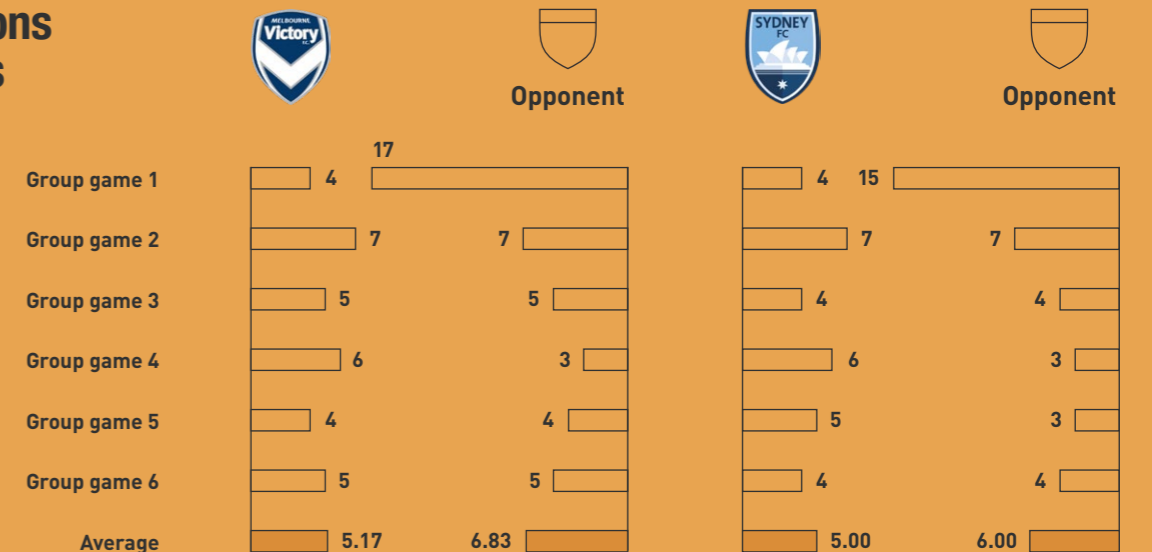
Average distance (kms)

Total distance (kms)



AFC Champions League clubs

Days break before game



The introduction of international breaks for the 2018/19 season is a major and welcome step in the gradual progress being made towards fairer and safer A-League scheduling.

The number of three-day breaks between matches was nearly halved from 17 in 2016/17 to 9 in 2017/18. There were only two instances of clubs combining a three-day break with travel.

Although our AFC Champions League participant clubs had at least one day less rest before their group stage matches than their opponents on average, those averages were skewed by one outlier match. Our clubs had at least four days rest before all their fixtures, whereas their opponents sometimes had only three.

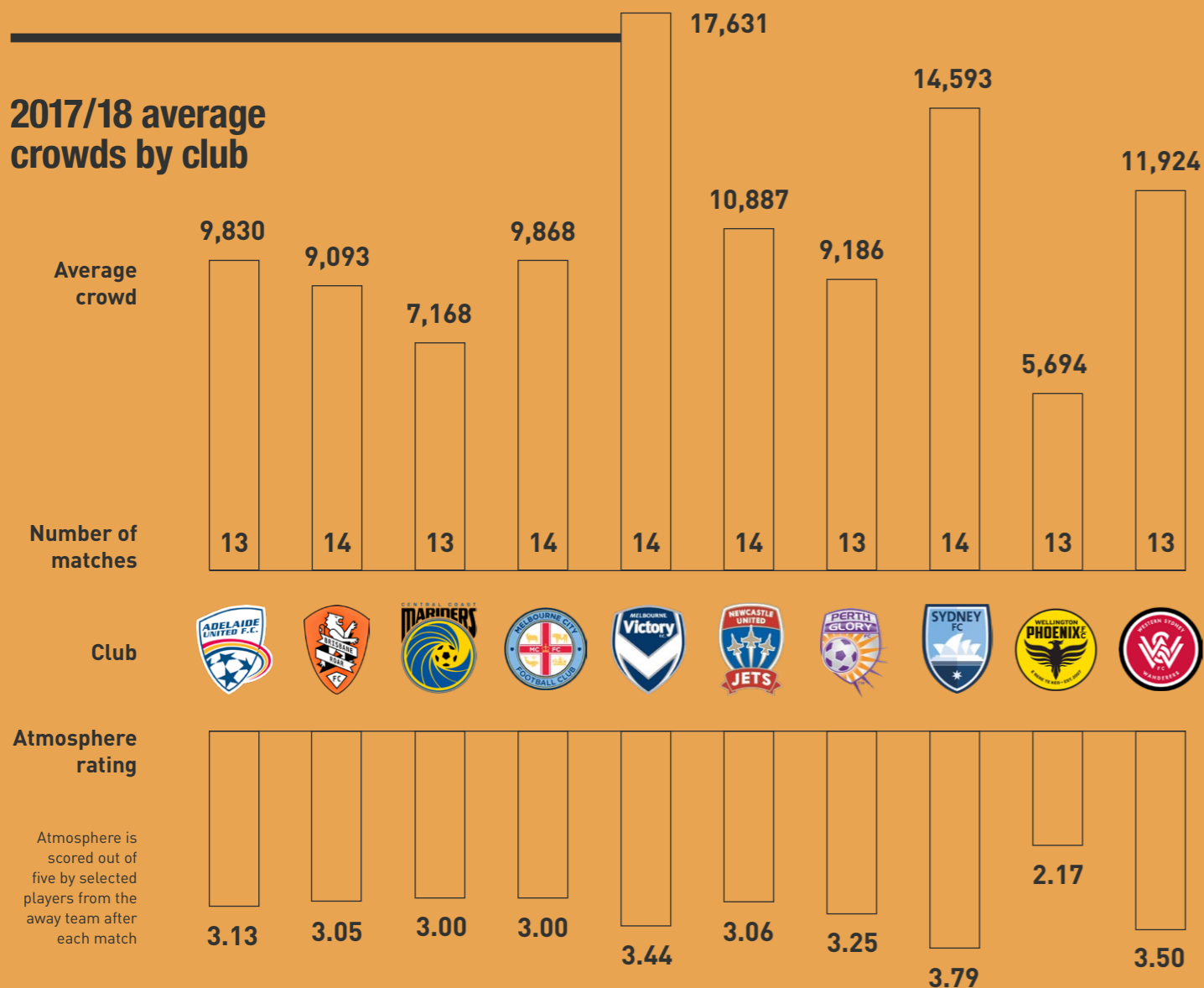
There are still gains to be made. Perth Glory

suffered from an extremely unbalanced early draw, with six away games in the first nine. This run correlated with a spate of injuries at the club.

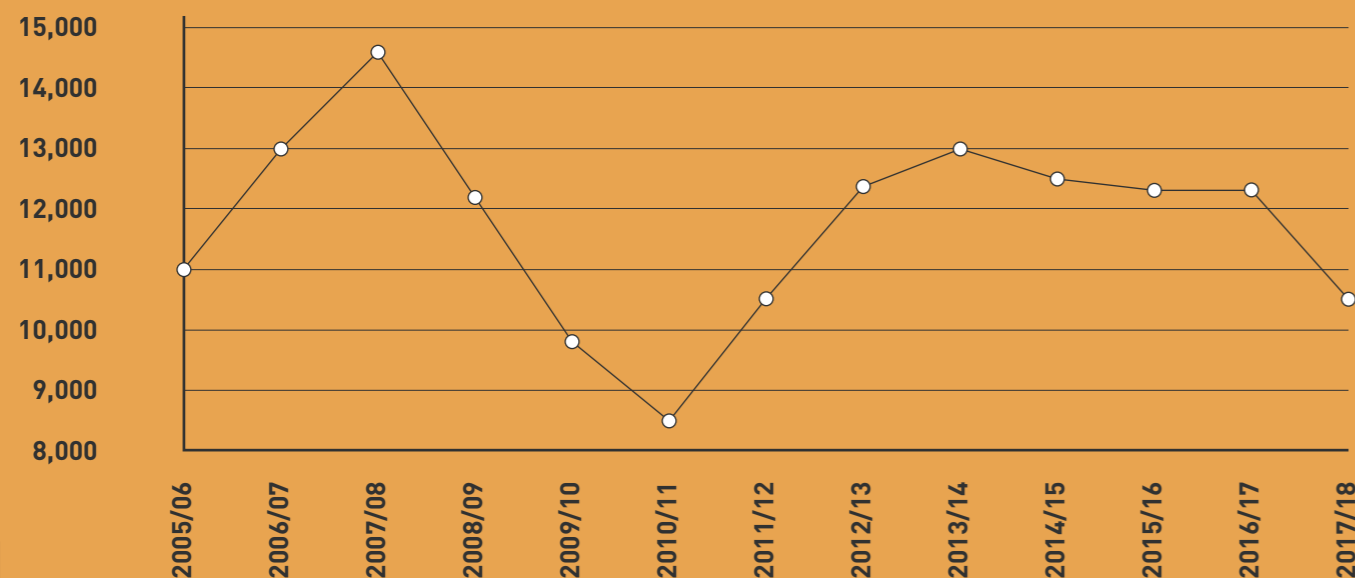
Attendance

Data relates to regular season only

2017/18 average crowds by club



A-League average crowds by season



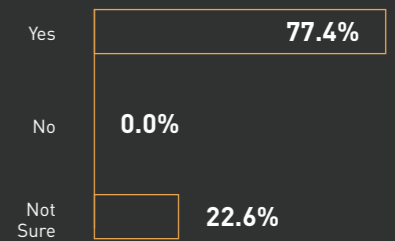
Top ten crowds 2017/18

- 36,433**
 Western Sydney Wanderers v Sydney FC
 ANZ Stadium
- 35,792**
 Melbourne Victory v Melbourne City
 Etihad Stadium
- 34,810**
 Sydney FC v Western Sydney Wanderers
 Allianz Stadium
- 25,211**
 Sydney FC v Western Sydney Wanderers
 Allianz Stadium
- 24,804**
 Melbourne Victory v Sydney FC
 Etihad Stadium
- 22,515**
 Melbourne City v Melbourne Victory
 AAMI Park
- 21,577**
 Melbourne Victory v Western Sydney Wanderers
 Etihad Stadium
- 21,037**
 Melbourne Victory v Sydney FC
 AAMI Park
- 20,083**
 Melbourne City v Melbourne Victory
 AAMI Park
- 19,416**
 Adelaide United v Melbourne Victory
 Adelaide Oval



A-League Survey

Do you think the A-League should be run independently instead of by FFA?



What do you think should be done to improve fan engagement and active support in the A-League?

Selected comments:

"Less rules and regulations on active supporters. Tickets prices reduced and overall match day experience needs to improve."

"Pyro smoke, more banners and flags, under 12 free with paying adult across board."

"More marketing from FFA. Get the game to the masses. Make the games more of an experience for fans."

"More access, less regulation, more engagement to make atmosphere unique. Game day experience inside and outside stadium must improve."

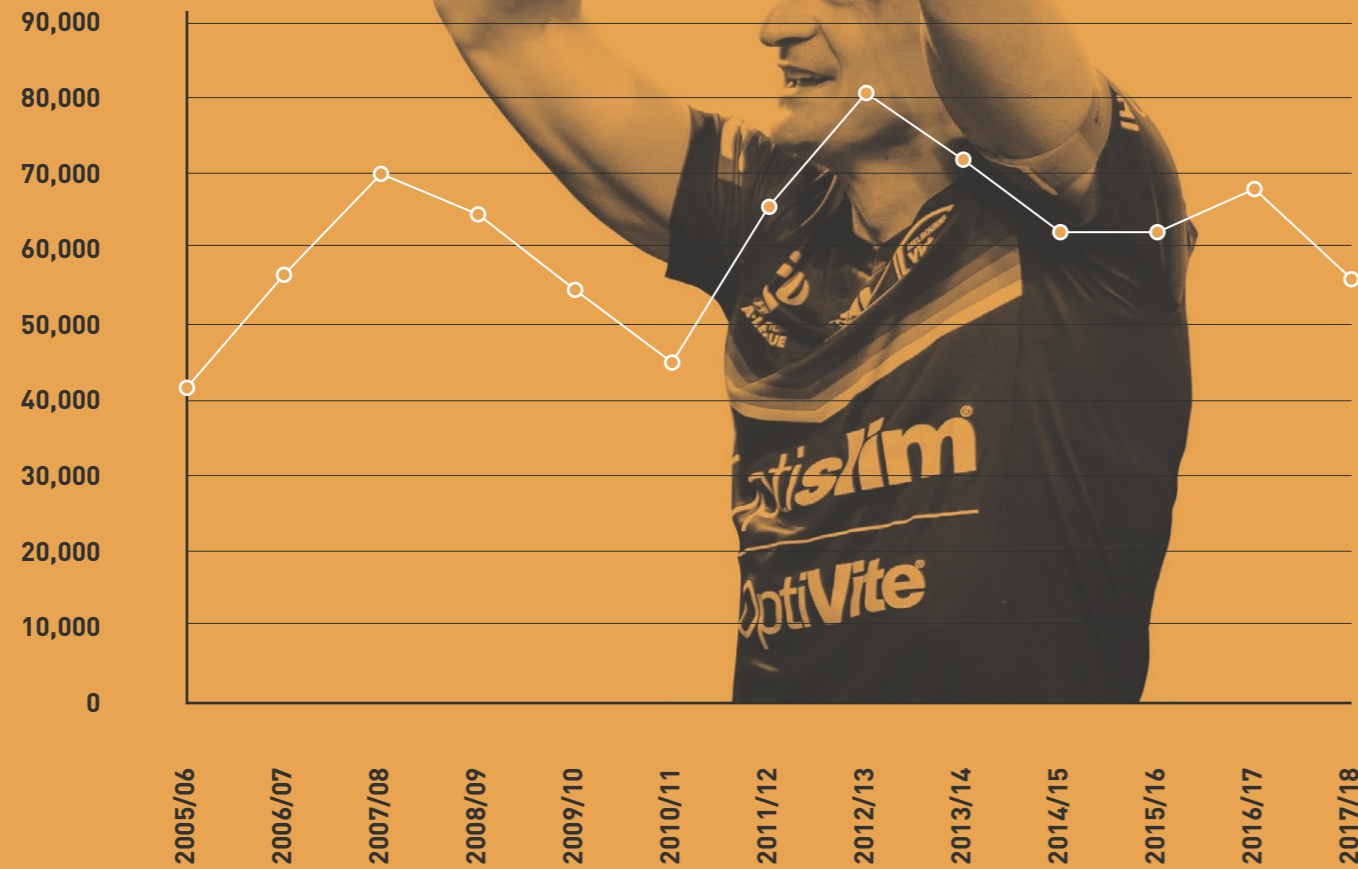
"Let clubs create their own culture. Better the relationships with the active supporter groups."

"Legalise safe smoke or flare usage for designated sections of active support areas."

Viewership

A-League average viewership by season

Data for Fox Sports only.
2017/18 data current to Round 19



The A-League-wide average crowd has declined every season since 2013/14, but this season saw a much more dramatic decrease, with the average attendance down 13.4% from 12,299 to 10,655. TV audiences also hit their lowest levels by far in the period with the current mix of ten clubs.

This is a concerning trend for players because healthy and successful careers are contingent on a healthy and successful game.

There are numerous factors which could have contributed to the downturn, but it would be hard to argue that the quality of football has noticeably dropped compared to previous seasons. The A-League continues to produce

high-scoring matches (see the Technical Report) and World Cup Socceros Josh Risdon, Daniel Arzani, Dimi Petratos, Andrew Nabbout, Mark Milligan and Tim Cahill all started this season in the A-League.

More likely the lack of effective promotion, the delay on expansion, the fractured relationships with active supporters, the implementation of VAR, and the disenfranchisement caused by the ongoing governance crisis may have played a role in the outcomes this season.

As usual, the biggest crowds came from clubs from the biggest cities playing each other. The only club featuring in the top ten attended

matches which came from outside Sydney and Melbourne was Adelaide United when it hosted Melbourne Victory at the Adelaide Oval in front of 19,416, the tenth biggest crowd of the regular season.

Clubs with larger average crowds tended to have better atmosphere at their matches, but this correlation was not universal. Having a similar crowd in a smaller venue seemed to create a better atmosphere. This result highlights the importance of having appropriate stadia.

Pitch Ratings

Stadium	Playing surface criteria	Rating	Stadium	Playing surface criteria	Rating
AAMI Park	Pace	4.1	McDonald Jones Stadium	Pace	3.5
	Hardness	3.8		Hardness	3.8
	Smoothness	3.9		Smoothness	3.8
	Overall	4.0		Overall	3.8
Adelaide Oval	Pace	3.0	nib Stadium	Pace	4.1
	Hardness	2.0		Hardness	3.4
	Smoothness	4.0		Smoothness	3.9
	Overall	3.0		Overall	4.1
Allianz Stadium	Pace	4.0	QBE Stadium	Pace	3.0
	Hardness	4.0		Hardness	3.0
	Smoothness	3.8		Smoothness	4.0
	Overall	3.9		Overall	4.0
ANZ Stadium	Pace	4.0	Simonds Stadium	Pace	3.0
	Hardness	3.5		Hardness	3.0
	Smoothness	4.0		Smoothness	4.0
	Overall	4.0		Overall	3.0
Central Coast Stadium	Pace	3.8	Spotless Stadium	Pace	3.8
	Hardness	3.4		Hardness	3.8
	Smoothness	3.4		Smoothness	4.3
	Overall	3.5		Overall	4.0
Coopers Stadium	Pace	3.3	Suncorp Stadium	Pace	3.2
	Hardness	3.5		Hardness	2.9
	Smoothness	3.8		Smoothness	2.9
	Overall	3.4		Overall	3.1
Etihad Stadium	Pace	3.8	Westpac Stadium	Pace	3.5
	Hardness	3.4		Hardness	3.4
	Smoothness	3.6		Smoothness	4.5
	Overall	3.6		Overall	4.2

Technical Report

Snapshot

3.02

Goals per game

3.1/5

Average rating of referees' communication with players

3.0%

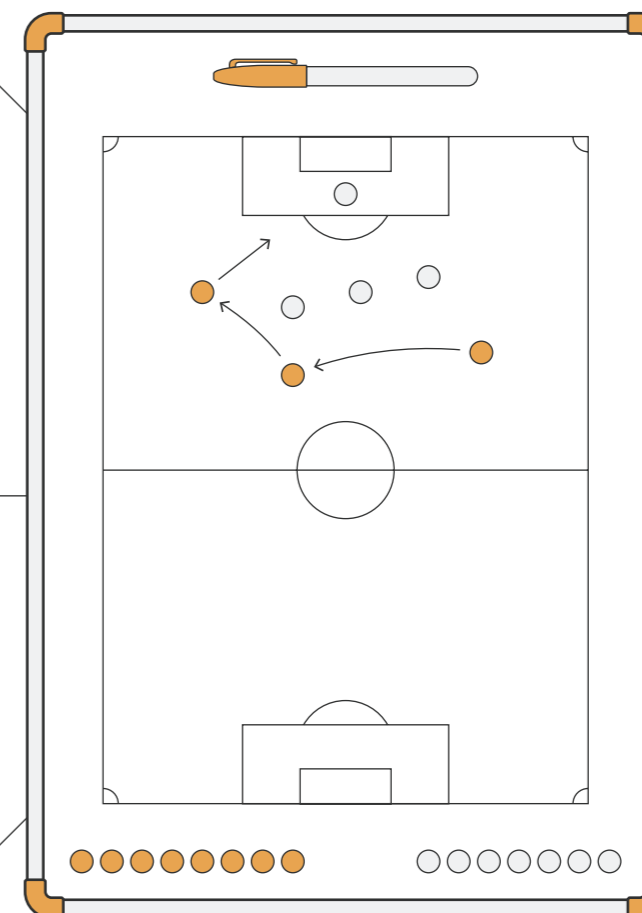
Matches ending goalless

53.2%

Players opposed to use of VAR in the A-League

854.5

Passes per match



For the second year, we used Opta data to compare the A-League's on-field profile with selected foreign leagues (J1 League 2017, German Bundesliga 2017/18, Major League Soccer 2017). We have also included last season's A-League data to identify emerging trends within our league.

We recognise that further tactical analysis and advanced analytics may be required to make definitive statements about the standard and style of the A-League, but some superficial conclusions can be drawn.

The A-League continues to track as a very high-scoring league with relatively few nil-all draws. Goals are spread throughout matches in the A-League rather than clustered towards the end of the 90 minutes in other leagues.

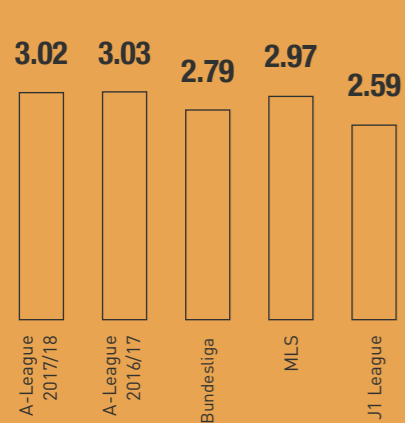
In terms of general play, the A-League featured a lower number of passes per match than the other leagues, and the lowest pass completion rate, but a higher rate of nearly all other types of incidents, such as tackles, interceptions, fouls, crosses and through balls, as well as cards and penalties.

It is probably fair to generalise that the A-League is a relatively high-scoring, action-packed league compared to global benchmarks but one with less focus on (or less ability to maintain) sustained possession.

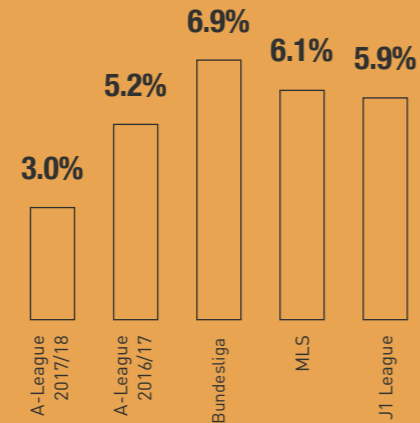
It is also evident that other leagues feature a larger diversity of game styles across teams, whereas the A-League's teams are all more balanced in terms of the share of possession they keep in matches.

Goals

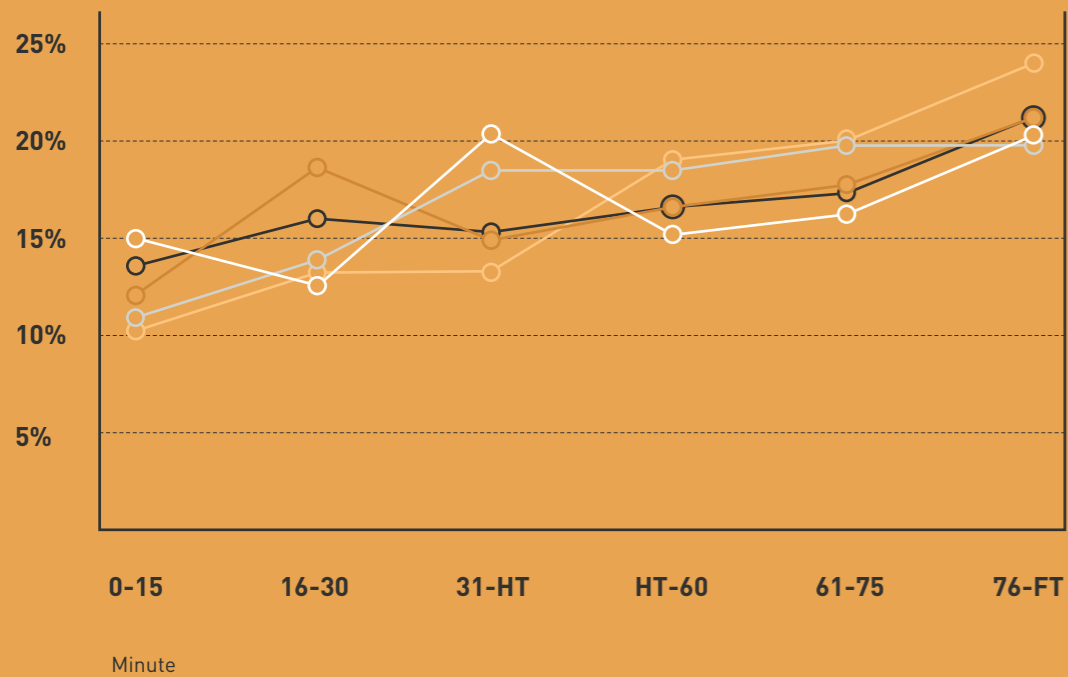
Goals per game



Percentage of goalless draws

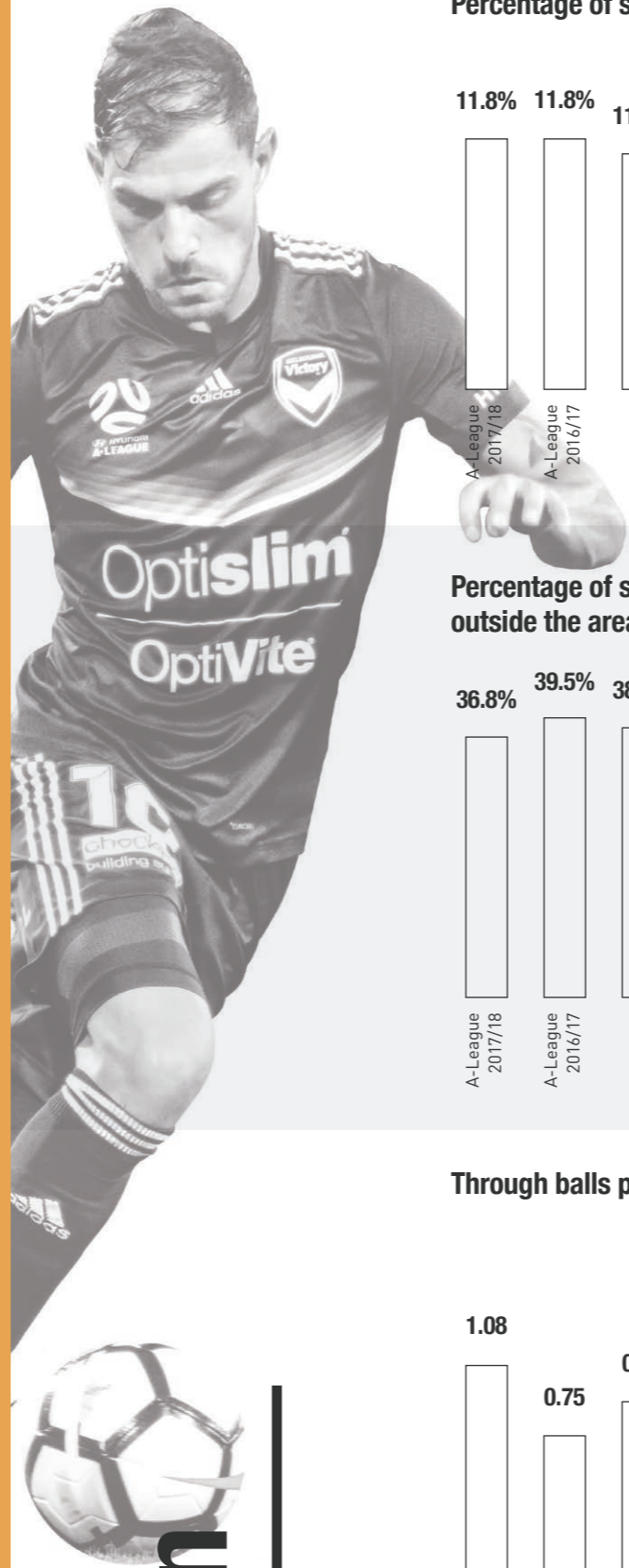


Scoring breakdown



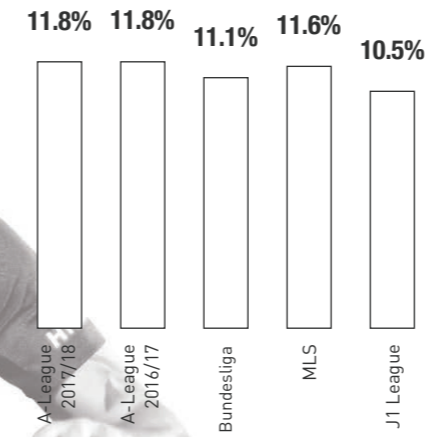
The A-League continues to be a high-scoring league by global standards, with over 3 goals per game on average, and a lower ratio of goalless draws than other leagues.

The other leagues analysed all see a much higher ratio of goals scored towards the end of matches, whereas this season the A-League saw a more even spread of scoring throughout the game, with 48.1% of goals scored in the first half (compared to 36.6% in the J1 League).

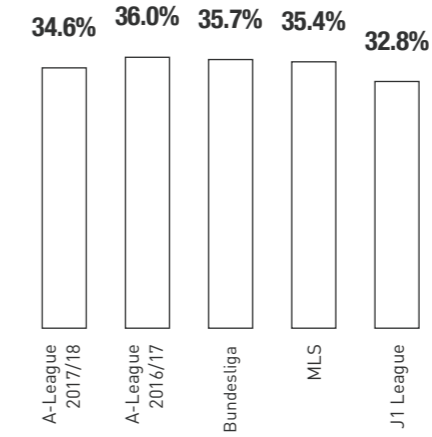


Creation

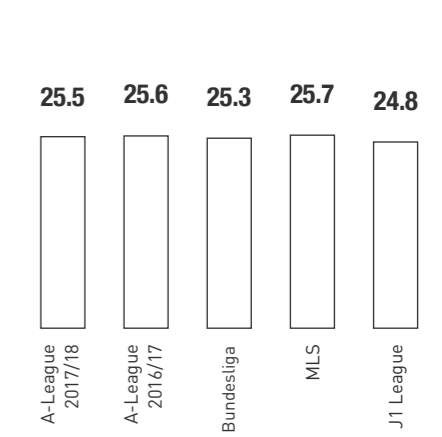
Percentage of shots converted



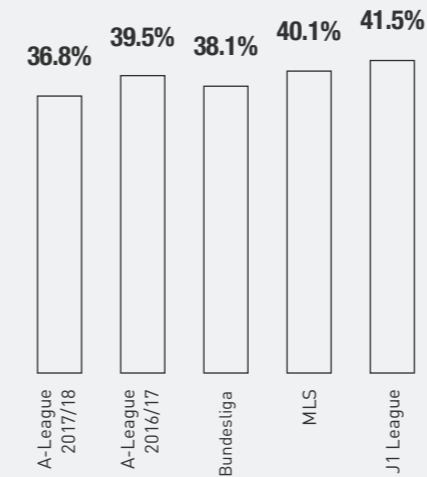
Percentage of shots on target



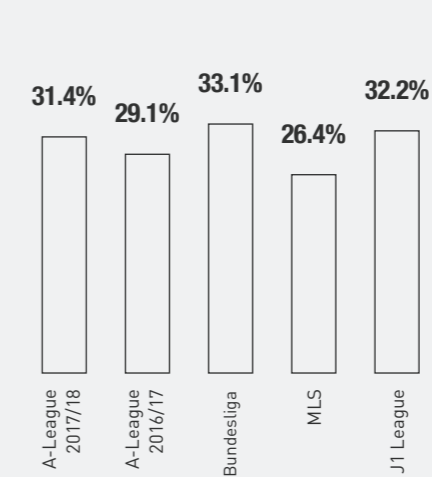
Total shots per game



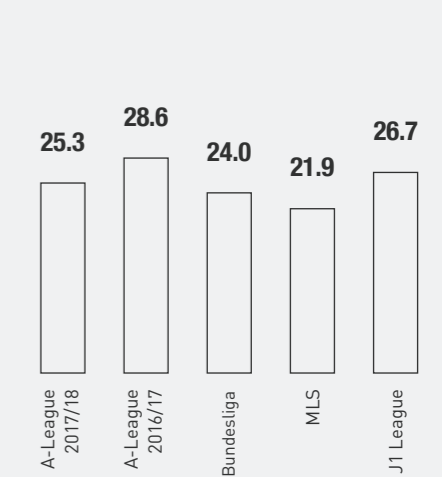
Percentage of shots from outside the area



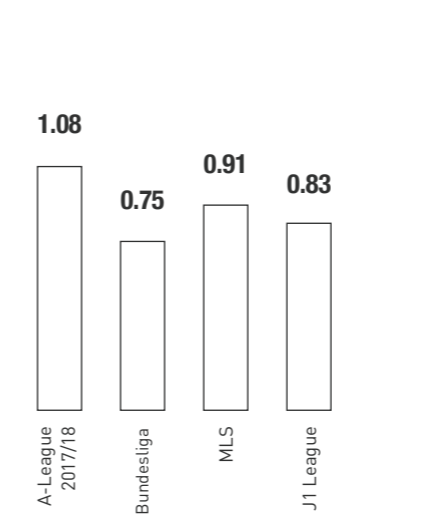
Percentage of goals from set pieces



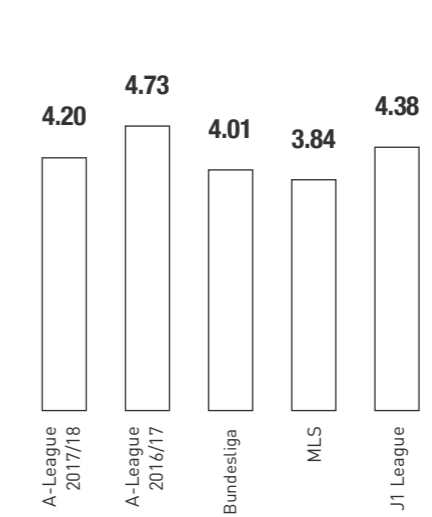
Crosses per match



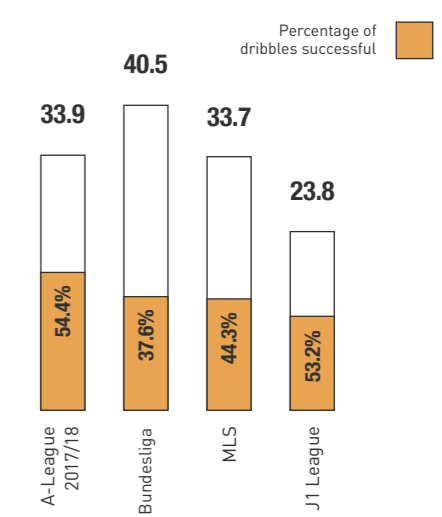
Through balls per match



Offsides per match



Dribbles per match



The A-League does not feature more shots than other leagues, but rather a higher shot conversion rate. This is partly (but not wholly) explained by a higher incidence of penalties in the A-League.

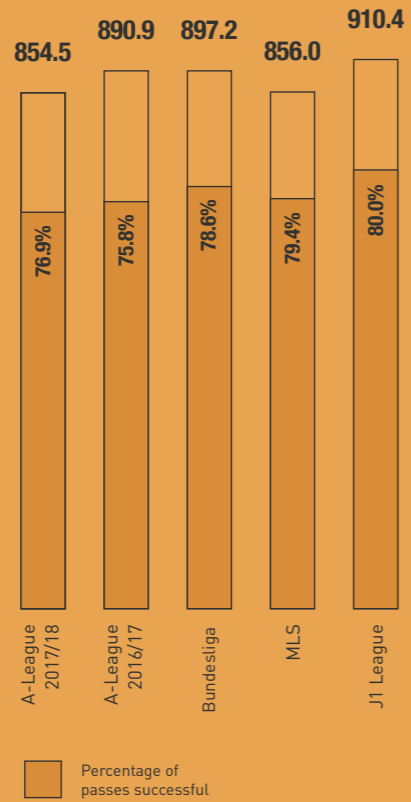
It could also relate to tactics (more open teams allowing higher quality chances,

especially on the break) or an imbalance in the quality of attacking players compared to the defenders and goalkeepers trying to stop them, due to the abundance of foreign marquee players in the attacking positions. The fact that the A-League had the highest percentage of dribbles successful lends weight to the second theory.

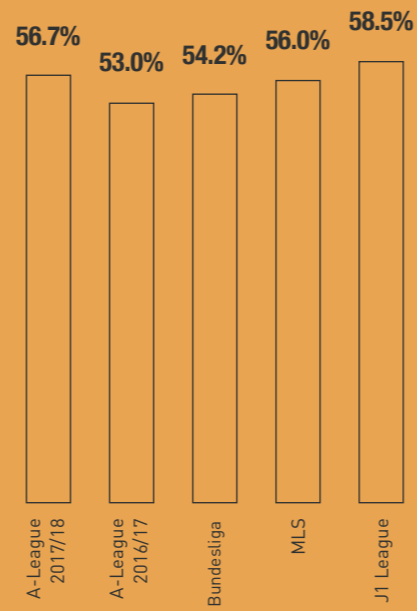
It is worth considering, then, to what extent the nature of the marquee system is contributing to restricted opportunities for Australian attackers, especially in light of the Socceroos' inability to score from open play in Russia.

Passing

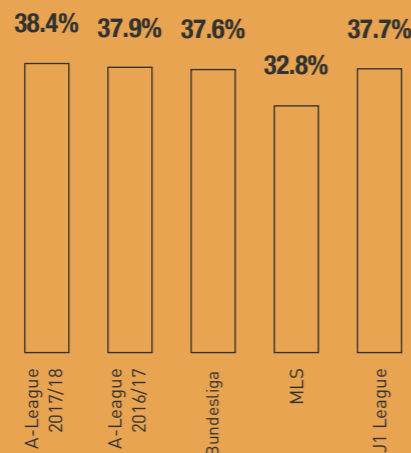
Passes per match



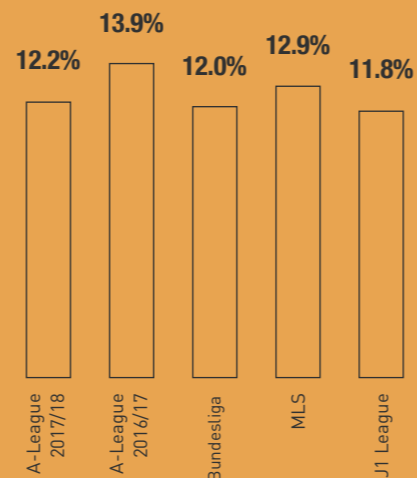
Percentage of passes in attacking half



Percentage of passes forward

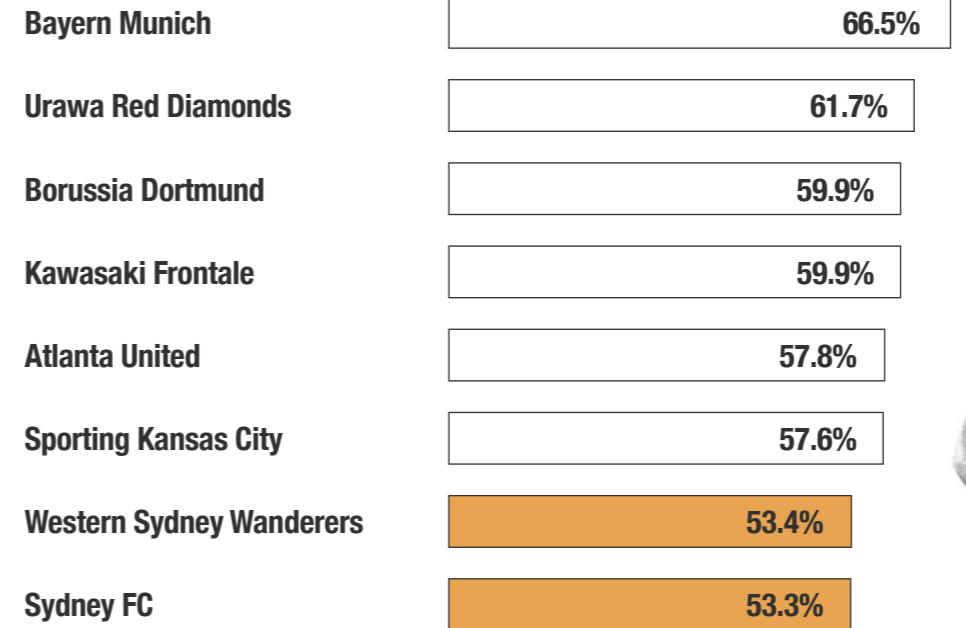


Percentage of passes long

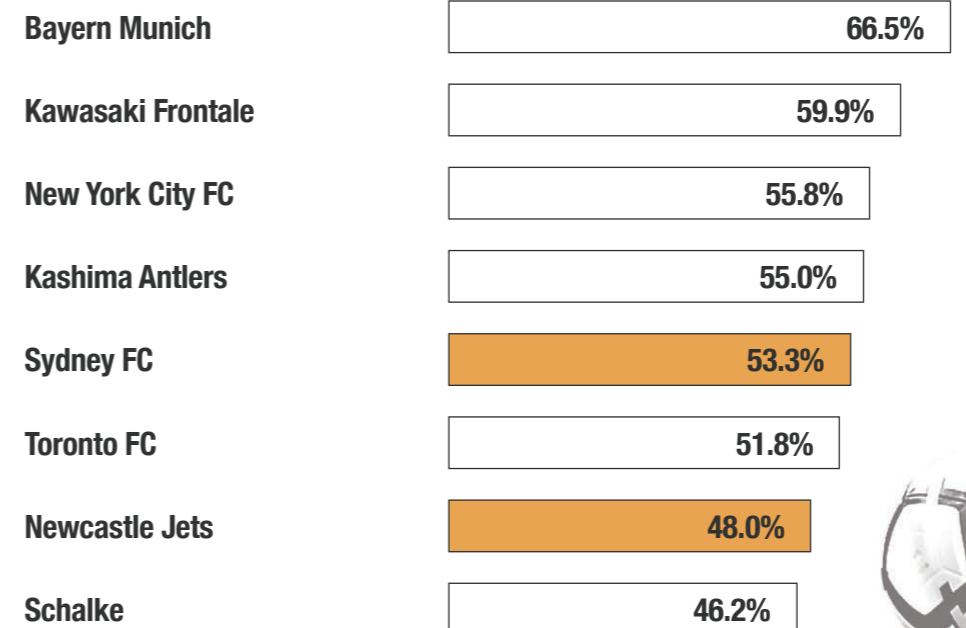


Possession

Average possession for top 2 possession teams

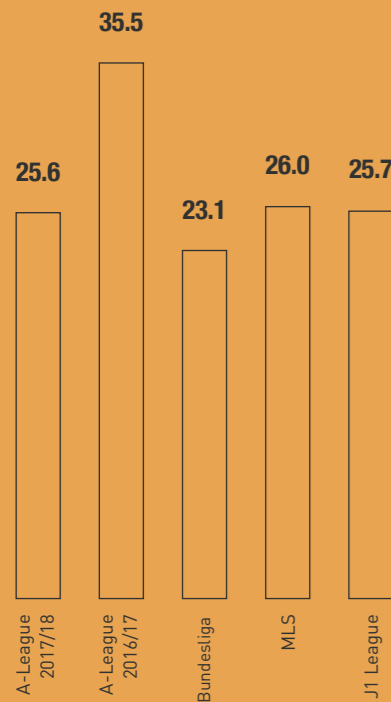


Average possession for top 2 placed teams

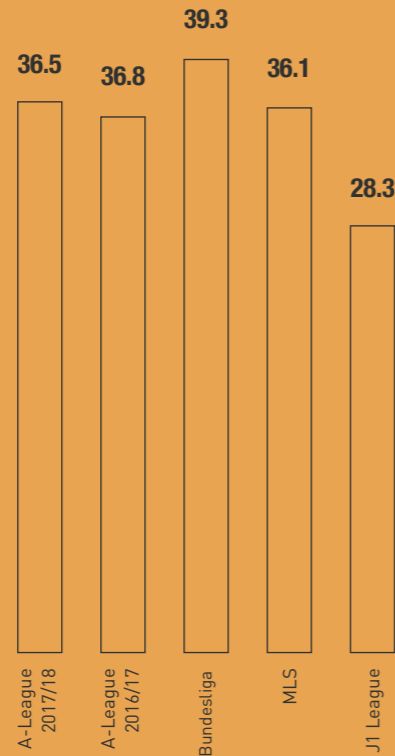


Defending

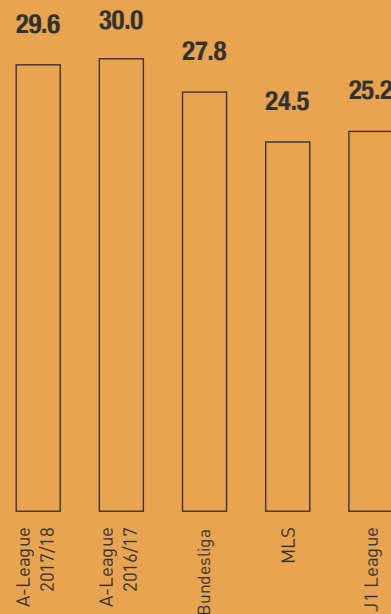
Interceptions per match



Tackles per match

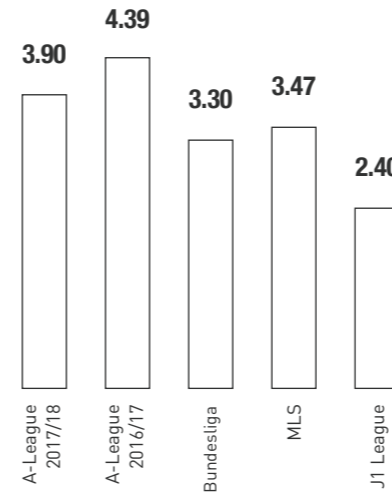


Fouls per match

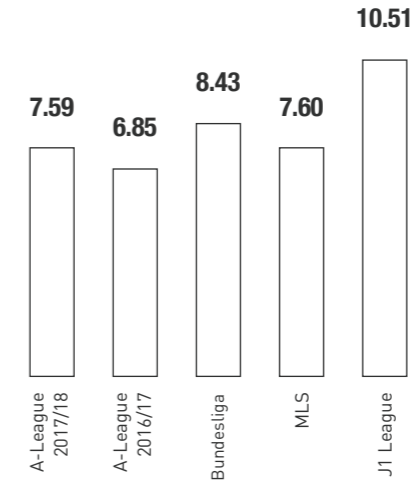


Refereeing

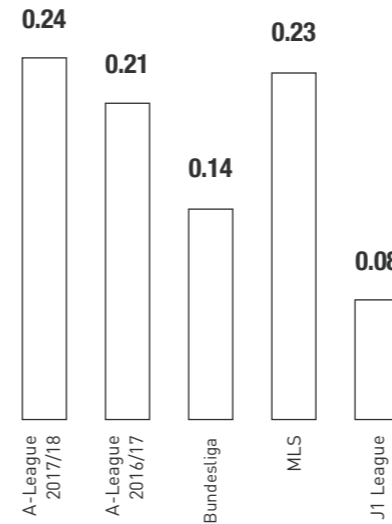
Yellow cards per match



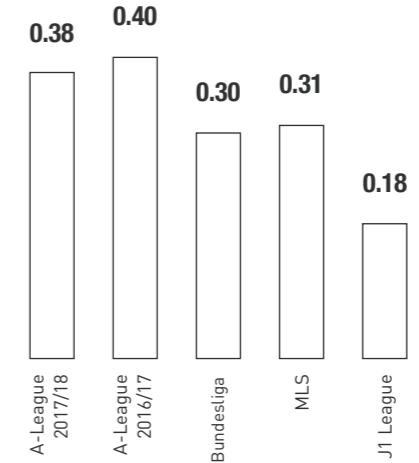
Fouls per yellow card



Red cards per match



Penalties per match



Referee assessment:

For the first time, this season we added a referee assessment to our post-match survey of selected players, which also rates the pitch and atmosphere.

After every match, players were asked to rate three criteria out of five (with five being the best) regarding the referee's performance. The average scores across the season were as follows:

Getting the big decisions right: **3.2**



Communication with players: **3.1**



Protecting player safety: **3.5**



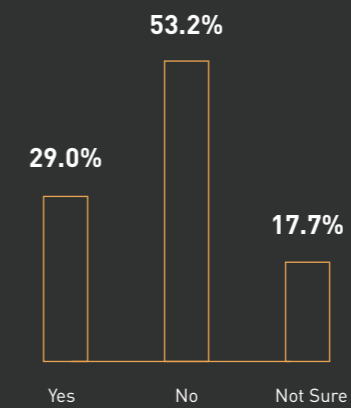
Opta's data shows that compared to global leagues, the A-League has a high incidence of fouls, yellow and red cards, fewer fouls before a yellow is shown, and more penalties. Of course, further analysis would be required to discern whether our referees are overzealous or our players are committing more offences.

Interestingly, the A-League saw a slight decrease in the number of penalties awarded from the previous season even though the introduction of VAR has been credited with the spike in penalties at the 2018 World Cup.



A-League Survey

Do you think the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) should continue to be used in the A-League



The PFA conducted a number of player surveys regarding the VAR throughout the season. One third of the way through the season, there was near universal opposition to the VAR from players.

By the end of the season (shown here) there was a softening of that position but still a majority opposed to the use of VAR in the A-League.



Injury Report

Snapshot



Since 2005, the PFA's A-League Injury Report has been a fundamental tool in the PFA's efforts to ensure the health and safety of our members. The Report has underpinned the PFA's advocacy for fairer scheduling, safer playing surfaces and improved conditions at clubs, headlined by the introduction of the Minimum Medical Standards in 2011.

This season's Report has identified an uptick in injuries compared to the past few seasons, going against a general trend towards fewer injuries since the Minimum Medical Standards were introduced.

The total number of injuries jumped from 130 to 160 and the total number of matches missed grew from 653 to 721. Our estimated cost of injuries jumped from \$3.9m to \$5.3m.

There is no one simple explanation for this result. Luck may always play a role. There could also be a positive angle to an upswing in reported injuries if it means clubs are being more cautious with players and more proactive in managing injuries.

However a spike in hamstring, quad and groin injuries warrants further analysis, as does

the large share of injuries in two particular clubs. One club, Perth Glory, had a particularly taxing schedule in the early part of the season, while the other club (which we won't identify here) favoured poorly in the players' end-of-season assessment of relevant operations and resources within that club.

The PFA will use this and other data as we continue to collaborate with clubs to improve outcomes for players.

Methodology

During the 2017/18 season, the PFA recorded the occurrence of injuries by collating data from official, publicly available sources such as the A-League and club websites and media releases, and some direct player feedback.

For this Report, injury was defined in terms of official A-League matches missed as a result of any physical complaint sustained during training or a competitive game.

The cost of a match missed due to injury for each club was calculated by dividing each club's total player payments (within the salary cap) by 432, which is the number of players the club is required to list on its team sheets across the season (16 players per match x 27 matches).

This formula is designed to estimate costs on a conservative basis since it does not include the cost of players outside the salary cap (including marquee), matches missed in the A-League Finals Series, AFC Champions League and the FFA Cup, and the cost of medical care and treatment to injured players.

The accuracy of the results is dependent on the accuracy of the information sources from which it is derived. Accordingly, the PFA does not warrant that the results are an exact and complete record of player injuries. They are, however, an accurate summation of the publicly available information provided by FFA and club sources.

Location of Injuries

Concussion	1	Number of injuries	1	Matches missed
	2	(2016/17)	4	(2016/17)

Collar-Bone	1	Number of injuries	11	Matches missed
	N/A	(2016/17)	N/A	(2016/17)

Back	5	Number of injuries	8	Matches missed
	1	(2016/17)	12	(2016/17)

Ribs	1	Number of injuries	4	Matches missed
	N/A	(2016/17)	N/A	(2016/17)

Abdominal	0	Number of injuries	0	Matches missed
	N/A	(2016/17)	N/A	(2016/17)

Hip	2	Number of injuries	2	Matches missed
	5	(2016/17)	14	(2016/17)

Groin	18	Number of injuries	60	Matches missed
	7	(2016/17)	19	(2016/17)

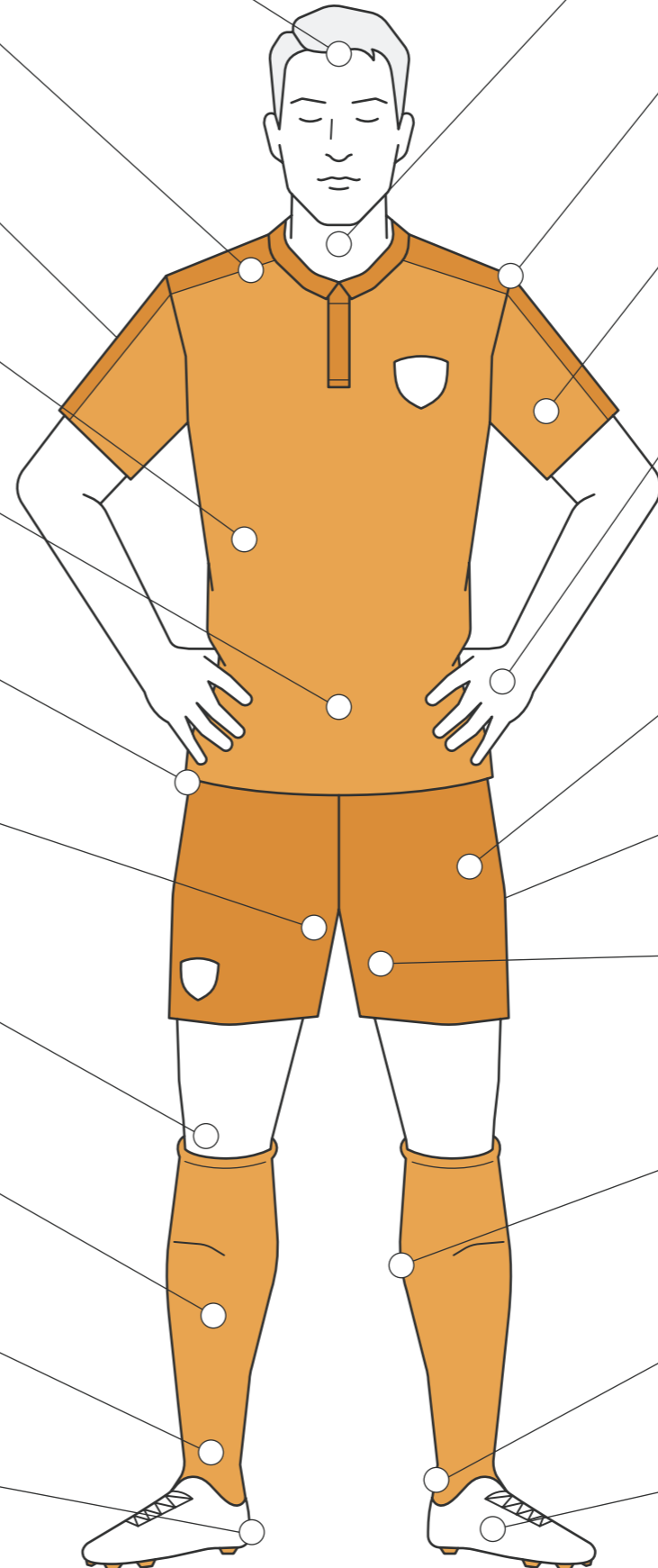
Knee	20	Number of injuries	167	Matches missed
	30	(2016/17)	244	(2016/17)

Leg	4	Number of injuries	14	Matches missed
	2	(2016/17)	3	(2016/17)

Ankle	15	Number of injuries	103	Matches missed
	14	(2016/17)	75	(2016/17)

Heel	0	Number of injuries	0	Matches missed
	N/A	(2016/17)	N/A	(2016/17)

Knee injuries decreased by 50% from 2016/17, highlighting the scale of the increase in other types of injuries in 2017/18.



Illness	9	Number of injuries	9	Matches missed
	6	(2016/17)	20	(2016/17)

Shoulder	2	Number of injuries	21	Matches missed
	2	(2016/17)	25	(2016/17)

Arm	0	Number of injuries	0	Matches missed
	2	(2016/17)	6	(2016/17)

Hand	1	Number of injuries	23	Matches missed
	N/A	(2016/17)	N/A	(2016/17)

Unstated	4	Number of injuries	5	Matches missed
	19	(2016/17)	29	(2016/17)

Quad	11	Number of injuries	72	Matches missed
	9	(2016/17)	45	(2016/17)

Hamstring	36	Number of injuries	130	Matches missed
	18	(2016/17)	67	(2016/17)

Adductor	3	Number of injuries	4	Matches missed
	N/A	(2016/17)	N/A	(2016/17)

Calf	18	Number of injuries	44	Matches missed
	5	(2016/17)	16	(2016/17)

Achilles	0	Number of injuries	0	Matches missed
	4	(2016/17)	39	(2016/17)

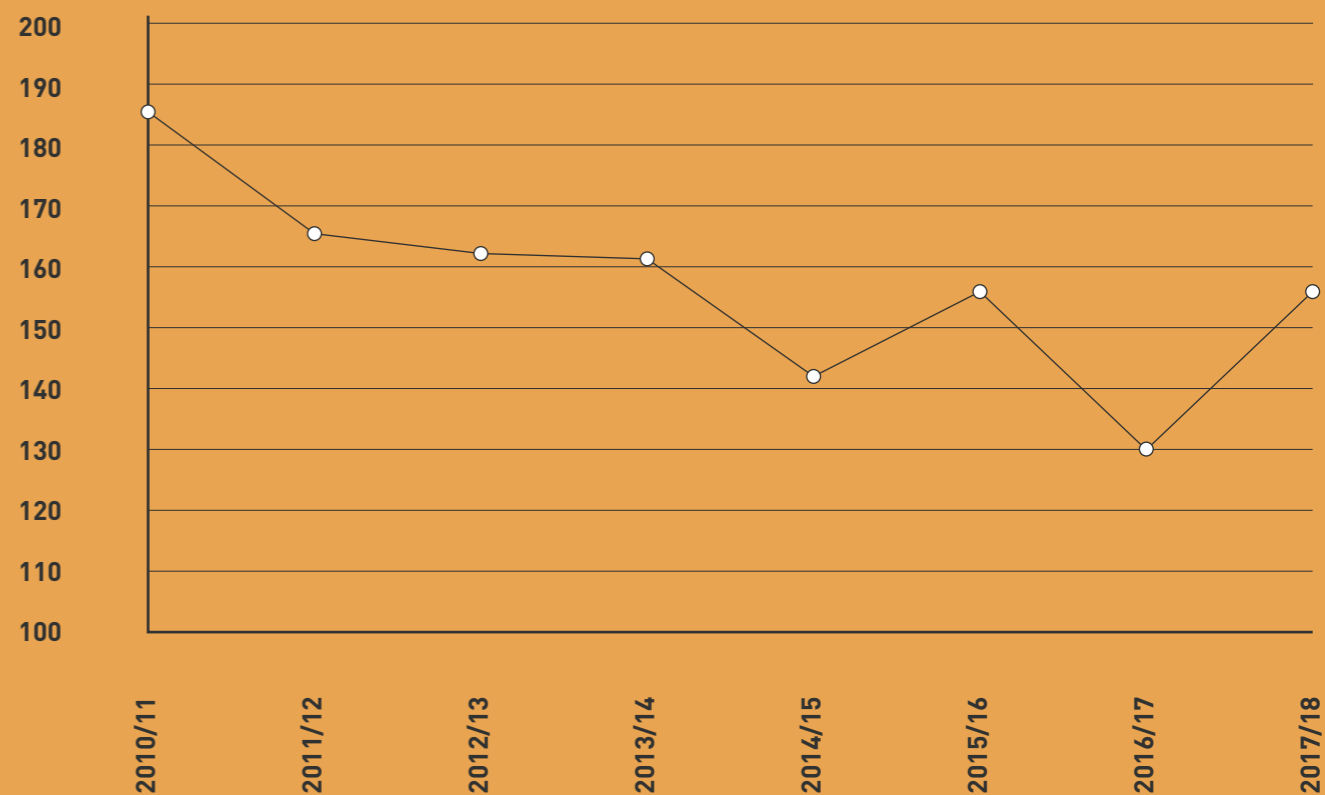
Foot	9	Number of injuries	43	Matches missed
	4	(2016/17)	35	(2016/17)

TOTAL	160	Number of injuries	721	Matches missed
	130	(2016/17)	653	(2016/17)

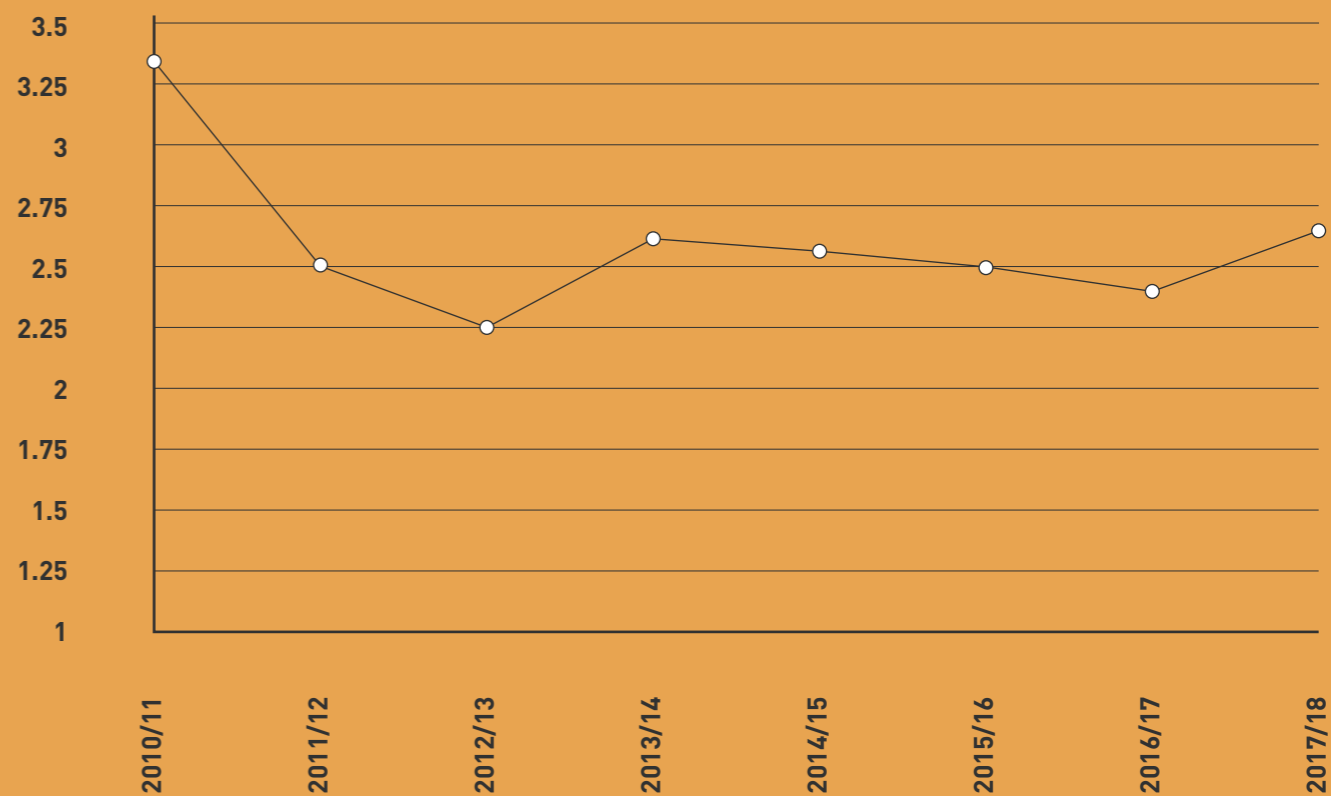


Injury Comparison

Number of injuries by season

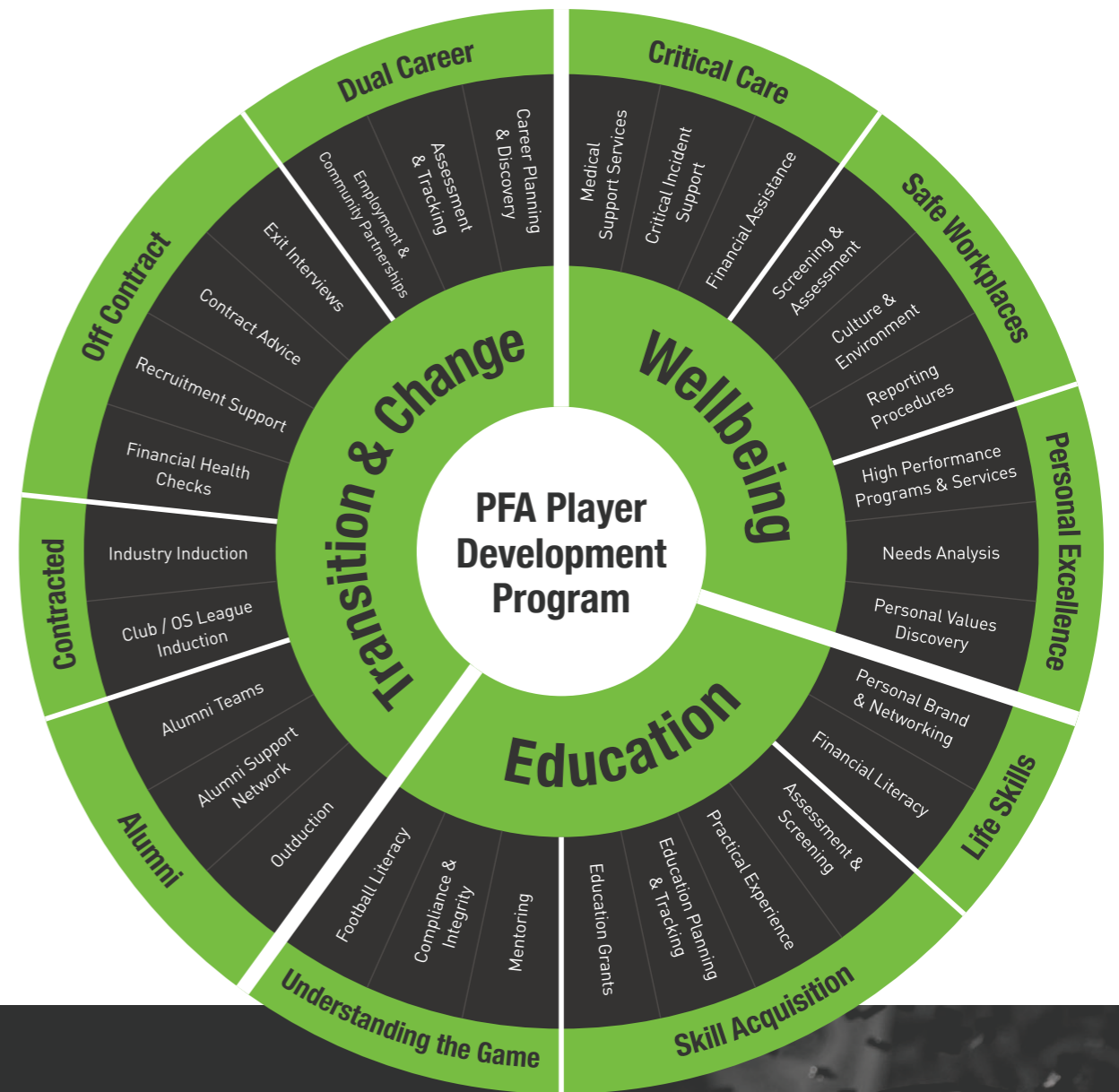


Average number of players unavailable each game per club



PFA Player Development Program

Better Careers
Better Lives
Better Futures



PFA Player Development Program



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Established by the PFA in 2013, the mission of the PFA Player Development Program is to develop, support and empower our people. Taking a holistic approach, the program is committed to ensuring that PFA members can achieve excellence in all aspects of their lives and have the necessary support to assist them in times of need.

For more information please visit pfa.net.au/player-development-program

“The program is not about offering us a viable Plan B, in case of the worst-case scenario. It is about making Plan A – having the best possible life – better”

Alex Wilkinson | PFA President

Courage
World Class
Intelligence
Trust
Respect



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